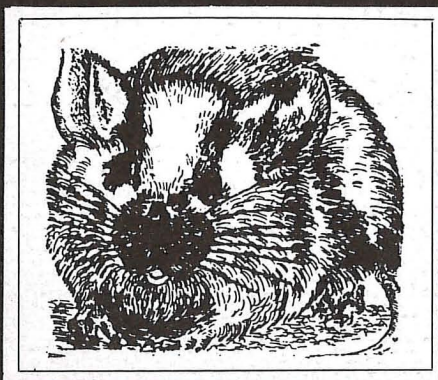


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# *Patterns*

Twenty-ninth Edition

LE SOURICEAU  
Cheryl Lorence



The 29th Edition  
of

# PATTERNS

A Publication of  
St. Clair County Community College  
Port Huron, Michigan

## PREFACE

Both verbal and visual expressions of creativity enrich our lives and help us to see the world around us and within us. Often, like James Joyce's "epiphanies," they offer us a concentrated glimpse of some moment of living seen by the author or artist and rendered in created form so others can recognize the truth of the moment.

This 29th edition of **PATTERNS** continues the fine tradition of such recording of the world today as it is lived and experienced by students of all ages attending S.C.C.C.C. From recent high school graduates to increasing numbers of highly motivated adults, from students pursuing occupational degrees to those seeking expanding horizons, from full-time dedication to part-time devotion, more student authors and artists submitted work for consideration in this edition than in any previous year. More were selected to represent the diversity of subject matter, reader appeal, and student creativity.

The beliefs and values, the loves and griefs, the observations and recollections they have recorded give us the opportunity to recognize universal experiences through our sharing of these individual expressions. In her essay a student states that the one true point of all art is a "joining of visions and imaginative interpretations" through the rendering of one person's individual reality, while another gives as his observation that the most important function of art is "to educate and force a realization of the human condition."

Read and view with an open mind; respond with an open heart to these visions of imaginative perception of the human condition, or, as William Faulkner once said, "of the human heart in conflict with itself."

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ARTS!  
Alive!



DARK WOODS  
Janine R. Murphy

## DEDICATION



Good things often come in twos: **PATTERNS** brings together the artist and the author, the verbal and the visual, the viewer and the picture, the reader and the text. In this edition it also brings together in one dedication two individuals who exemplify in their living and working and now in their retiring the best of dedication and devotion to high standards of education. With fond appreciation for all they have meant and have given to St. Clair County Community College, both as students themselves and as faculty and staff members, we dedicate this edition of **PATTERNS** to Doris and Bob Lloyd, a couple extraordinaire.

Together they have not only worked with and for students in the Office Education program, but they have, through their own involvement and love of the arts, supported all students in their various activities by attending concerts, plays, and art exhibits. By their appreciation of music, art, and poetry, they have demonstrated the personal value to be found in the arts for each individual.

Together they have encouraged students to gain educational credentials and work experience, to develop habits based upon reliability and responsibility, and to acquire good skills in the fine art of communication and presentation. They have shown by their examples that an enriched life is one based upon a healthy balance of complementary actions: personal and professional interests, individual and community needs, and work and play activities. Their presence on campus, affecting the daily lives of many students, will be missed, but their patterns for working and living well will continue to affect many lives through the example they have provided. Such patterns of personal influence enrich the educational legacy found in the best of community college experiences.





**HARDWARE STORE WINDOW**  
**Lisa Porrett**



## THE ELEANOR B. MATHEWS WRITING AWARD

The Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award was established in 1983 to recognize students whose writing submitted to the annual **PATTERNS'** competition "exhibits outstanding creativity, technical skill, and individual style." Mrs. Mathews fostered such standards of creative excellence during her many years of teaching at the community college and exemplified her teaching by her own writing, frequently published in a variety of magazines and journals. With this award established in her memory, she continues to encourage students to write well and to value each individual's written perceptions of life.

Scott A. Klein is the fifth recipient of this award. Like previous recipients, Scott was selected to receive this honor not for any one piece of writing but for his continuing efforts, his developing body of work, and his evolving, individual style. While at S.C.C.C. in addition to English 101 and 102 (Honors), Scott took several literature classes and both the advanced composition and creative writing courses. He has had work published in three successive editions of **PATTERNS** and has taken second place honors with his poetry for two consecutive years. In addition to his poetry, a literary essay was selected for publication this year and a personal essay in the 27th edition. Scott has also written several short stories and currently is writing a play. He has transferred to Wayne State University where he is majoring in English.

Scott is a young man who is highly self-motivated in pursuit of his educational goals. He enjoys trying something different in his writing, whether with unusual form or a unique treatment of a subject. His writing draws upon the variety of his experiences, his observations, and his reading. It reveals his awareness of social issues and political concerns, his understanding of human conflict both within and without, and his belief in the power of language and literature to challenge and change humanity and its many institutions. At the end of his English 102 Honors class, he summarized what he had learned in the following excerpts.

*"The literature I have read has given me new insight into myself. Somehow, and I'm not sure how or why, what I read has changed my perceptions of life and myself. It has given me new courage, confidence, and determination... More so, and I don't think I can overstress the point, the vision of literature has helped me in becoming a writer. I have always been a proponent of self-education, and I have come to believe that literature must play an important part. I will never allow my mind to become stagnant; [I have found] a way to prevent that..."*

The selection of Scott Klein as this year's recipient of the E.B. Mathews Writing Award recognizes his creative ability as a writer and his individual achievements in writing. It also identifies him as one of those ideal students that Mrs. Mathews once defined as "a person who wants to learn because he knows that anything he learns is going to apply in life and as a result of that he is naturally going to study." Each recipient of the Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award has exemplified her definition. These recipients now include Steven W. Strobbe (Port Huron) - 1983; Mary Joann Hayes (Richmond) - 1984; Roberta A. Lueth (St. Clair) - 1985 and 1986, and Scott A. Klein (Port Huron) - 1987.

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SCIENCE

Second Place Honors

by Scott Klein

"The majesty and burning of the child's death.  
I shall not murder  
The mankind of her going with a grave truth  
Nor blaspheme down the stations of the breath  
With any further  
Elegy of innocence and youth."<sup>1</sup>

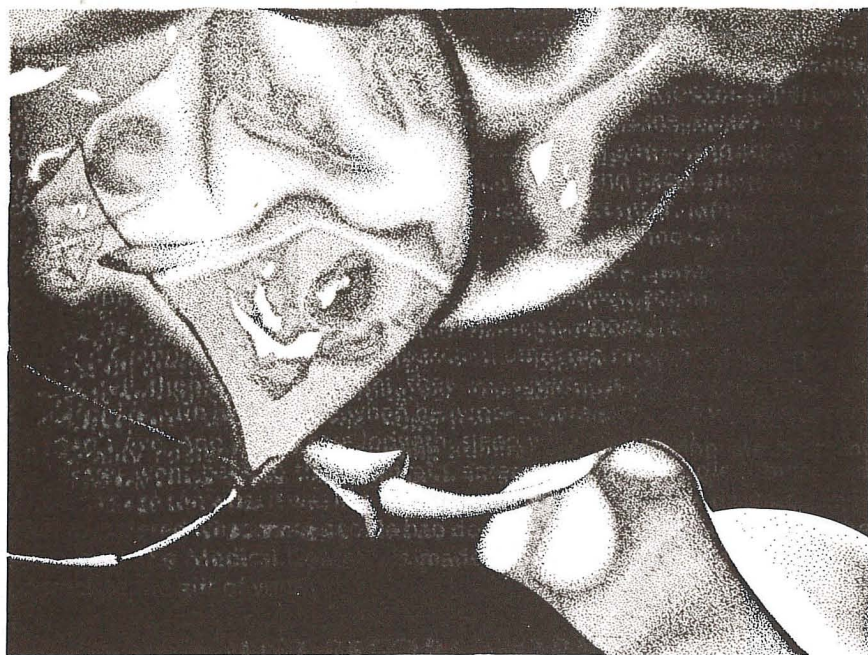
"What is the significance of science?" my wife asked  
And I turned from the window  
Where lately I had spent hours watching  
Children, yellow and green, growing on the lawns  
Like lanky dandelions.  
"What's that that you said?" I asked  
And she folded the newspaper  
And set it on the floor next to the chair.  
"It was nothing," she said,  
"I was talking to myself."

I can't look at her face, and not in the eyes,  
And not see her dressed in black  
Forever weeping over the body  
Of my son. Dying. He was and forever is  
Drawn to death by disease  
Running in him like a child  
Unaware its moments are spent  
In the minutes it has caught,  
That the well is empty  
When the last drink we draw...  
I don't look at her any more  
Without seeing broken  
Promises — hers, mine  
Man's and technology's  
Crumble when death calls.

She talks to herself a lot. And so do I.  
It's a way to pass the time  
When there's nothing left to do  
But sit and wonder what the weather, our son,  
Might have shouted blowing in here  
Tanned, bearing bright — clear water  
Running rapid through the summer—  
Nothing to do but watch the children play  
And forget, in a moment's long stare, he's not  
Out there, with them. He's silenced

Like the wind in empty expanses. I did hear  
What she said, "And what about science?"  
I didn't hear what she meant—  
If there is any meaning left—  
Passing me in the middle of the room. She went  
To the window. I, to the chair,  
To read the news as she stares  
At the children, yellow and green.  
And another car passes. She flinches. Reaches  
To protect these children like she did our own.  
"What about science?" I said.  
"What's that?" she asked turning back.  
"Talking to myself," I say  
Leaving so she can think about  
The meaning, if there is any...

<sup>1</sup> From Dylan Thomas, "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London."



NATURE'S WAY  
Teresa Schommer



# CRYSTAL BALLET SLIPPERS

First Place Honors

by Margaret A. Kelly

The kettle whistled over the blue flame of the gas range sending white steam into the otherwise dark kitchen. Martha flicked on the light and opened the glass door of the china cabinet to get a teacup and saucer. She pushed her gray-streaked, shoulder-length hair behind her ear and placed a teabag in the cup. The whistling finally stopped as she turned off the burner and poured the boiling water into the cup. "Five a.m.... Five a.m.!" she said when she saw the stove's clock, "I can't believe they are doing this to me."

"Come on, Mom!" Someone yelled from the front room.

"I'm coming, I'm coming." Martha glanced at the automatic coffeemaker and chuckled. She had set the timer for six knowing that it would be an early morning. She pressed the "ON" button so Kurt wouldn't have to wait an hour for his caffeine fix. At the arching entrance to the living room, she stopped to absorb the still, quiet scene before her. Jim, Jeff, and Paul were sifting through the massive pile of colorfully wrapped packages that filled the far corner under the tree and fanned out a third of the way into the room. This year a seven-foot scotch pine had the honor of wearing sixteen years of accumulation of ornaments: red glass balls, green ribbon balls, a matchbox creche, paper mittens, needlepoint Santas, wooden rocking horses, and other homemade and store-bought decorations. On a top branch set in front of a white light was a small pair of crystal ballet slippers. Martha's mother gave it to them that first Christmas after Martha and Kurt were married. She heard Kurt snore and turned to see him stretched out on the sofa, his feet hanging off the end and his arm flung over his eyes hiding all but the salt and pepper of his beard.

"Can we start yet?" asked five year-old Paul.

"Just a minute. Wake up Dad." She made her way to the old rocker and set her teacup on the oak plant-stand beside it. Kurt was sitting up and yawning when she said, "Get ready... get set..." The boys' eyes widened, their bodies twitched like racehorses at the starting gate, "...GO!" Off they went grabbing the largest packages first, calling out names and tearing into meticulously wrapped paper.

"To Paul from Santa," nine-year old Jeff read. Paul ripped off the red and blue Snoopy paper and lifted a box of sixty-four Crayola crayons high over his head.

"Look, Mom," he said, "it even has a thing on the side to keep them pointy with. Can I take it to kindergarten and show Mrs. Smiley?"

"It's called a 'sharpener', and we'll see." Paul put the box of crayons with his growing pile of booty under the T.V. stand.

"To Martha from Prince Charming," read twelve year-old Jim, throwing a soft red and green bundle across the room. "Who's Prince Charming?"

"Who do you think?" bellowed Kurt winking at Martha. "How do you like it, Princess?"

"How romantic," she answered coyly, holding the flannel nightgown to her chin. Martha added it to her own growing pile of new possessions and kept her eyes on Jeff. His cornsilk-covered head was bent over another package, this one revealed a sea-blue sweater to match his eyes. He had opened the underwear and socks, the transformers and He-man doll; but he hadn't found that special gift yet, the one he wanted more than anything else, the one she had told him they just couldn't afford. He had no clue that it was there; it wasn't even on his Christmas list.

"Aw right! A chemistry set!" cried Jim. In his excitement he jumped up and lost his balance falling into the tree. It shook noisily, shedding needles and ornaments. Martha held her breath watching the crystal ballet slippers in the high branch shake precariously. They tinkled together delicately like wind chimes while casting white speckles of light around the room. They swung slower and slower, finally resting, secure in their place on the tree, the soft chime still echoing in the room. Martha sat back and let out her breath in a long sigh.

Gazing up at the ballet slippers, she remembered that very special Christmas when she was Jeff's age. That Christmas that brought her that gift she wanted more than anything else.

Martha crept down the stairs at the side of the living room and peered into the room lit only by the lights from the Christmas tree. The scene was soft around the edges, like a dream, with the giant tree set up in front of the never used fireplace on the other side of the room. Presents were piled high, reaching all the way to the archway of the dining room. There were big ones, little ones, red, green and silver ones. There was a tricycle with a red bow, probably for two year-old Aimee, and a sled with a green bow, surely for all the girls, and a couple of odd shaped ones that defied Martha's ability to guess what they were.

Martha sat on the third from the bottom step, on the thick brown carpet, and held a wrought iron pole of the banister in each hand, pressing her face into the space between her hands. She was the first one up, and it was quiet, so blessedly quiet. As much as she wanted to get at those presents, she wanted even more to bask in the respite from her six sisters, three older and three younger.

Still on the step, she saw herself enter the dreamlike scene as a ballerina, the girl in The Nutcracker Suite, and dance across the room on a cloud of beauty and perfection. The handsome Nutcracker was with her lifting her so high that she felt as if she was flying; then he gently set her down to dance some more. He was so strong and handsome, and she was so graceful. At nine, she wasn't quite sure what the storyline was, but she listened to The Nutcracker Suite every day and had seen it once on television. She loved getting lost in the music, becoming part of the dream itself the way a ballerina did. Oh, to be a ballerina! It was what she wanted more than anything else in the world.

But it took lessons and leotards and tights and ballet shoes, and all that took money. "And if you have special lessons, then all your sisters will expect the same sort of thing, and we just can't afford it." That was Mom's last word. Martha still put it at the top of her Christmas list. There was always that far-out hope that her dream would come true, that hope that she would become that beautiful dancer.

"WOW! Santa came! Santa came! Get up! Get up!" screamed four year-old Agnes from the top of the stairs pulling Martha out of her daze and back to the fact of Christmas morning and a room full of toys. But only one present was allowed before Mass and breakfast: the presents Mom picked out. Seven new dresses for seven little girls to wear to Church.

Martha's dress was sea-blue to match her eyes and compliment her platinum hair. It had a white lace V that started at the waist and ended at each shoulder, and pearly white buttons sewn down the front. The real buttons were in the back. The skirt was full with a see-through top layer over a blue silky layer with lots of stiff netting that made it puff out just like a princess dress. Around the waist was a wide white sash that was long enough to make a big bow in back. Martha adjusted the short puffy sleeves, then twirled in front of the hall mirror, trying to watch herself as she spun around. She looked just like a princess. A ballerina princess. The ballerina princess in The Sleeping Beauty Ballet. And she was gone into another fantasy, not bothering to come out of it until they were home again and ready to open the rest of the gifts.

"To Aimee from Daddy."

"To Agnes from Santa."

"To Martha from Anne."

"To Ginny from Martha."

The nametags were read by the four oldest girls, and presents passed around the family. Mom and Dad sat on the couch near the stairs and helped the youngest, Aimee and Agnes, open their packages. They took forever. Every time they opened something, they played with it until Mom and Dad made them open another one from the pile growing at their feet. Ginny, Maura, Anne, Martha and Cathy had piles of unwrapped gifts carefully set out of the way of traffic.

Martha's pile was in the dining room under a chair. In it were socks, underwear, mittens, a flannel nightgown, a rubber ball, a box of eight crayons, coloring books, a Thumbelina doll and two new Barbie outfits. Martha placed a tiny notebook on top and said, "Thanks, Ginny. I'm going to write a list of all my presents in it."

"Well, don't do it yet; here's another one."

Mom looked up in time to see a ballerina wrapped gift fly across the room to Martha. "There are two more with that same wrapping paper," she said. "See if you can find them, Ginny."

As Martha opened the one, Ginny found the other two and set them next to Martha. Everyone stopped to watch.

"Oh, thanks, Mom, these will keep my legs warm walking to school." She held the black tights up for all to see and opened the next box. She lifted the lid, pushed aside the tissue paper and stared with her eyes wide and her mouth opened.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Maura, eager to get on with her own discoveries. Martha held up black, short-sleeved leotards. She looked up at Mom and Dad. They were smiling, yet Martha was afraid to say anything for fear even hoping would make the leotards and tights disappear.

"Open the last box, Wee Hen," urged Dad. Quickly she ripped off the ballerinas and lifted the lid from the shoebox. She screeched as she jumped up with a black ballet slipper in each hand and ran to the couch.



"Thank you! Thank you!" she said, hugging first Mom, then Dad. "This does mean I get lessons, too... Doesn't it?"

"Of course it does, you big silly goose," answered Dad. She jumped over the couch and ran upstairs to try on her new dance outfit. Later, when the morning's mess was cleared away, Dad played one ballet after another for her, and she danced and danced and danced.

"Oh, man, this one is heavy," grunted Jim. "It's for you, Jeff, and it's the last one."

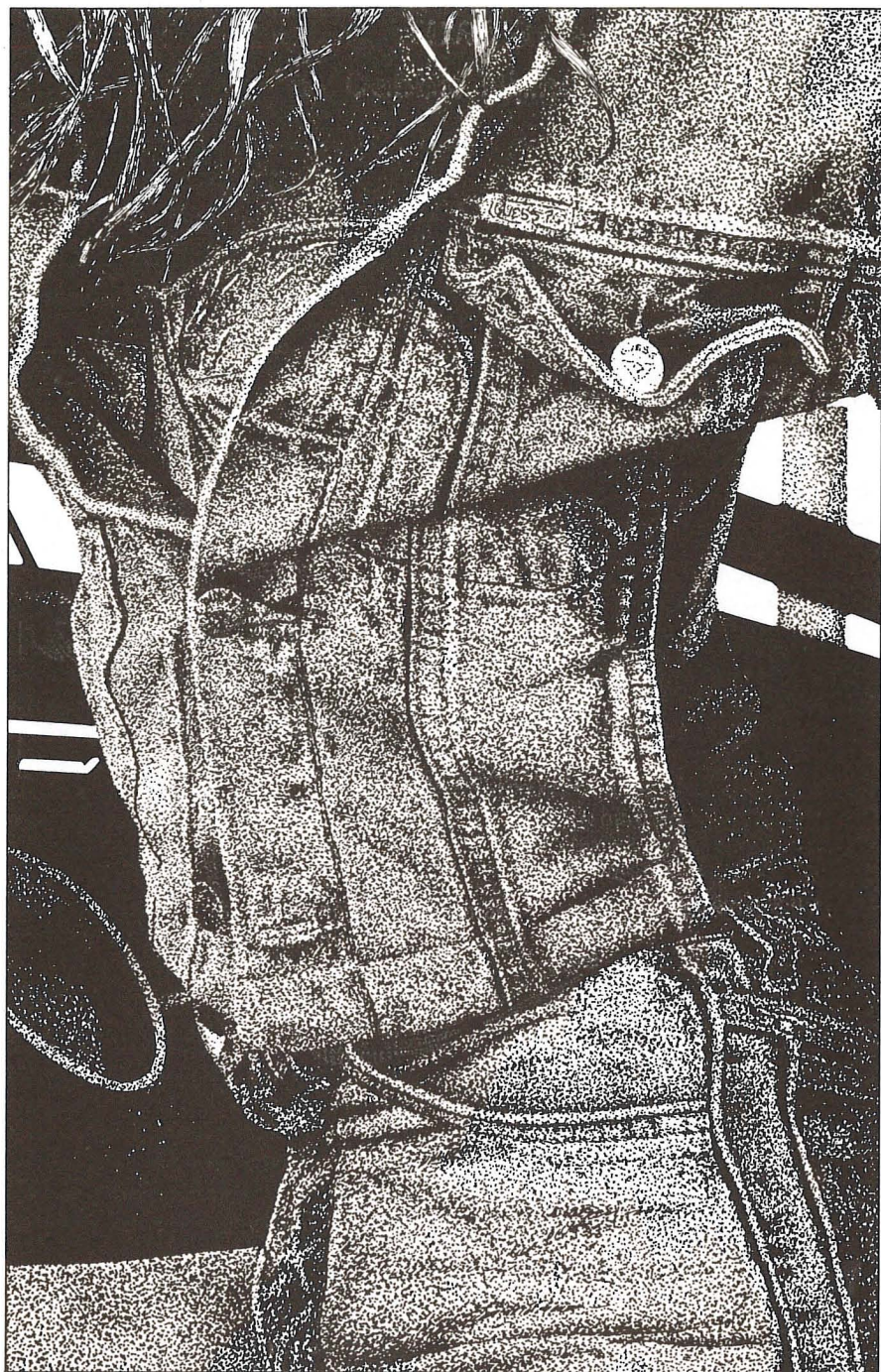
Martha's attention returned to her own living room and her sons. Everyone watched as Jeff pulled the paper off the last gift of the day. With the paper off, Jeff stared open-mouthed at the black case with the words "Meyer's Music Center" embossed on the side. Looking at everyone staring at him, he gulped and unclasped it. Slowly he raised the lid and let out a long sigh.

"I don't believe it," he whispered. "It's beautiful." As he lifted the trumpet from the velvet-lined case its polished brass surface made the colored lights from the tree dance around the room. "This does mean I get lessons... Doesn't it?"

"Of course it does, you silly pickle," answered Martha. "There's a beginner's book in there somewhere so you can start practicing now." Jeff put the mouthpiece in place and blew a loud "BLAATTZZ."

"Oh, no!" cried Martha, "Please don't..." she stopped, remembering the ballerina of so long ago. "...Well, okay, blow away." She smiled as she picked up the papers and ribbons to the awful braying of Jeff's trumpet. She thought of the tiny box she already had, safely tucked away in a seldom-used drawer. It held the sterling silver trumpet that would someday hang on his Christmas tree.





DANI JEAN  
Danny Hayes



# THE HAND

## Second Place Tie

### by Catherine O'Connor

It was December, 1975, and Christmas was only a few days away. Our holiday preparations were, at best, half-hearted, because my young husband lay dying of cancer in our upstairs bedroom. Roger was truly one of the bravest people I have known. Not only had he distinguished himself in the combat zones of Vietnam, but he had also won many honors as a Detroit police officer. As an undercover narcotics officer, he pursued drug dealers and pushers in the seedier neighborhoods of the Fifth Precinct. I was proud of him for volunteering his service to his country during a time when many fled to Canada to avoid the draft. I was proud also because he went the "extra mile" as a police officer by dedicating his life to saving lives. He was awarded a meritorious citation for saving a toddler when its mother dropped him from a two-story building. Roger had rushed the disturbed woman and grabbed the little boy just as she let him go. But I was most proud of the courageous way Roger faced the unseen enemy: the cancer that was slowly destroying his health.

In those cold days of December, his body was finally wearing down, and he was dying after months of chemical therapy treatments. I had brought him home from the hospital a few days after Thanksgiving so that he could spend his last days in his own home, surrounded by the love of his family. I know that our two small daughters, Adele and Rachael, were a source of joy to him. Michael, who was just a baby, couldn't understand why his Daddy never got out of bed. The most important thing in my husband's life was his family, and he drew strength from his children in those last days.

It was becoming increasingly difficult for me to keep up household chores, take care of the children and nurse Roger as well. One day in particular stands out in my mind. Roger's pain had reached an unbearable level, and he wanted me with him continuously. When he could no longer stand the pain, I would urge him to control his breathing and concentrate his thoughts on pleasant experiences. This technique seemed to help his control just as it had helped me during childbirth.

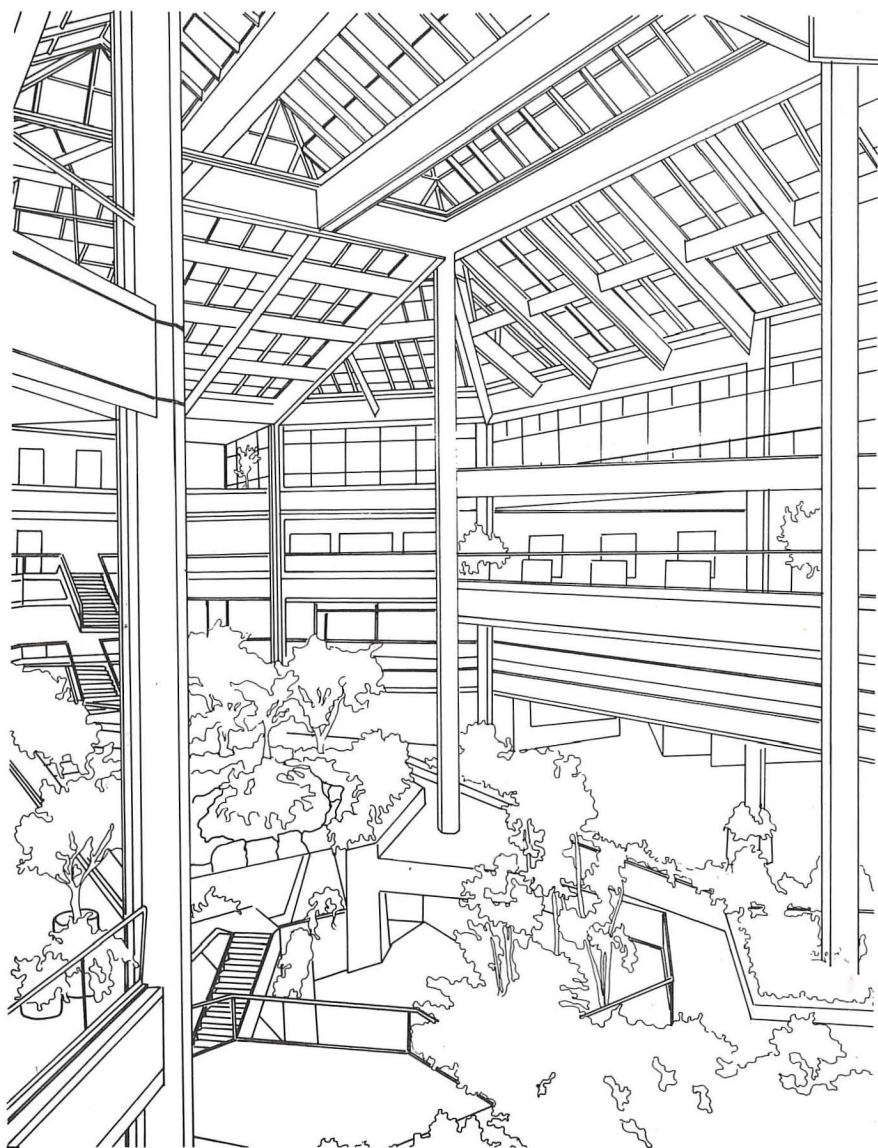
On this day, however, the pain was especially terrible and nothing I did would distract him from it. It was engulfing him like a black cloud, blotting out everything else. It seemed to me that even the sun stopped shining in those moments, so dark was that day of suffering. I had been so strong throughout his illness, and I attributed my strength to a deep faith in God. Something deep inside of me snapped, though, as I held Roger's hand while he screamed. I began to cry and rail against God. My faith and hope crumbled around me as I directed my rage at one I had trusted. "What good is faith?" I shouted to the air. "If you really exist, God, let me take his pain." As I wept uncontrollably and raved, I became suddenly aware that Roger had quieted and was staring at me with wonder. With tears in his eyes he asked, "Do you really love me enough to take my pain?" I assured him emphatically that I would if only it were possible. I thought then of Jesus Christ who gave His life for others; I thought of the pain

that He endured without anger. A beautiful and sweet peace filled that death-room at that moment, and I knelt by the bed and cried until I thought my heart would break.

Suddenly I sensed the presence of someone else in the room. With my head bowed, I felt someone place a comforting hand on my shoulder. There were many relatives in our home that day offering their support, and I guessed that one of them had heard my shouting and had come into the room. After a few moments, I raised my head and turned to speak to the comforter. No one else was in the room. I was amazed and a little frightened, for still I felt the imprint of that hand.

Later I told the others in the house of my experience, and we wondered what it could mean. I definitely had new strength from that moment, and I certainly had need of it in the days ahead. Roger died less than a week later. Through his death and the funeral arrangements that followed I had perfect peace. I am convinced that this unusual serenity came from a source far greater than man. I considered my immediate future, with three small children depending on me, piles of bills that needed payment, endless chores to do and most of all, long lonely years of widowhood that stretched before me. Yet, I had peace and contentment. It was nothing short of amazing.

A few weeks after the funeral, I sat down with a cup of tea and began to sort through a mountain of neglected mail. As I came to a particular card in the pile, I again felt a sweet presence surrounding me. With shaking hands, I opened the envelope and saw that it contained a sympathy card from a dear lady I knew. As I turned the card over to inspect the front, I cried out in amazement. On it was a picture of an obvious widow, dressed in black, kneeling and crying. Behind her, dressed in glowing white, stood Jesus Christ with his hand upon her shoulder. The artist had etched such a tender look of love and understanding on the face of Christ, that even ten years later, the remembrance of it brings tears to my eyes. Call it fantasy, if you will, or even wishful thinking, but I know that someone placed a hand on my shoulder that day, when I was overcome with despair. Stranger things have happened, I am sure. Most of us have heard accounts of miracles that cannot be explained nor understood by the natural mind. Must we be limited by our own human understanding or can we dare to accept by faith the existence of a higher being? I'm not a theologian or a philosopher; I only know that someone comforted me in a supernatural way, and for that desperately needed touch, I am grateful.



**TRAPPERS ALLEY**  
**Jennifer Ameel**



# IMAGINATION FROM A CHILD'S MIND!

by Carmen Saldana

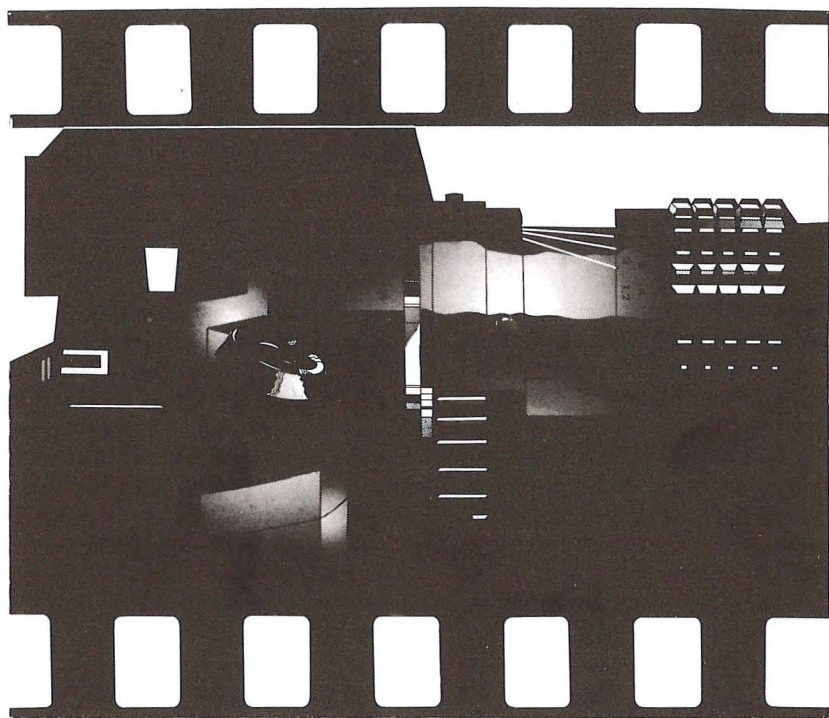
For all of my curiosity and activity as a child, I never really looked up at the sky or down at the earth long enough to be aware of what I was seeing, or even to realize my own response to those experiences. I've never run my hands over a stainless steel surface or touched the bristles on a brush. I never thought about the sensations that I experienced when I put my feet in cool mud or warm sand. I've smelled my mother's perfume and my father's shaving lotion, but as a child I never really knew the odors of paper, paste, leather, wood, fruit or flowers. I could hear noise, but I never listened to silence.

Children need to know that their responses are important, and that their inner feelings can be expressed in many different ways. The freedom to indulge in dramatic play, finger painting, music and other forms of art helps children to respond and develop artistically. Learning how to respond to music, rhythm, drama, and visual art is a part of human experiences and that's why the arts are so important during early education. As parents we often think of the arts as a specific activity like painting, pasting, singing, story acting, and dancing without much thought of the real goals for the use of these activities.

An imaginative child will use art activities in several different ways, and we as parents can help them develop these skills by keeping them busy, letting them develop their own responses, and finding out that they can find release of tension by being involved with art in some form. Art helps prepare a young child for formal schooling; it also teaches a child about relationships and patterns.

A child's recognition that he is part of a particular society and that his interest in learning more about the people in his society all begins with the parents. Eli and I work together; I try to let him use his own imagination to express himself with emotion outwardly. It also provides a close interaction between the two of us. My responsibility towards Eli is to give him knowledge and to further his responses to the world around him. Instead of trying to make him an artist or musician or a craftsman, I try to help him develop as a social person with capacity to observe, respond and communicate.

Once children are aware that they have responses; then through music, painting, and other forms of art, they can be helped to find ways to express their inner feelings and the thoughts that accompany them. Using the arts is not just a matter of putting a crayon in my child's hand and saying "draw me a picture", or asking him to "clap time to music". The arts are a resource to my child and other children to develop sensitivity and competence in all types of activities throughout the rest of their lives.



FOCUS  
Cheryl Lorence

# IN PRAISE OF COFFEE

First Place Honors

by Rae Walker

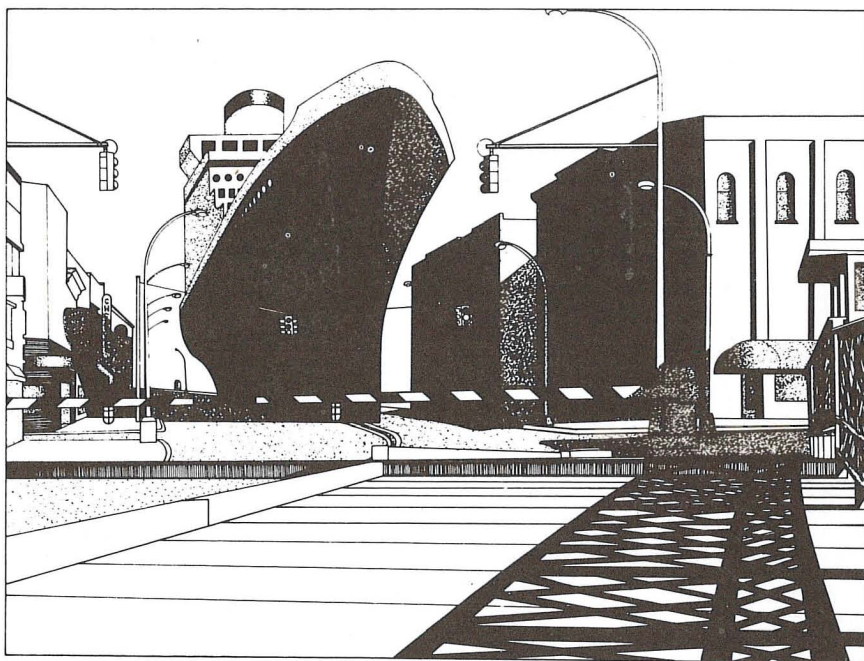
Contemplate  
A cup of coffee.  
Consider  
The rich creamy caramel color.  
Catch  
The captivating mountain-grown aroma,  
Scent of sunny skies  
And just enough rain.

Lush, green vegetation  
Surrounds  
Juan Valdez as he gathers the treasure.  
A sweltering, sweaty struggle  
Up and down the hills, brothers,  
Berating his balky burro.

Ever so gentle  
Handling of the harvest.  
Ever so careful blending  
To capture the right nuances.  
Somewhere between  
Richly robust  
And silkily smooth.  
A hint that perhaps  
An orchid once grew nearby.

A cup of luxury  
To sip and relax with  
Demands  
Fine, fragile porcelain  
To contain it.  
A shimmering "ting" as stirred,  
And a contented "Ahhhh".





**WRONG TURN**  
**Martin J. Rhein**

# JOURNAL ENTRY

## In The Penal Colony — Franz Kafka

### by Mary Spangenberg

Great detail is given in yet another "harrowing" (no pun intended) story on the trials and tribulations of the nature of man. The reader gets the feeling of a certain impending doom; the setting is morbid, without color; feelings, emotion and expressions are virtually non-existent.

The Penal Colony itself can be compared to existence in the world, meaning that the world has a way of punishing its inhabitants for "crimes" that we don't understand, crimes that we may have inadvertently committed through no real fault of our own.

The officer is a staunch believer in methods and dogma created by the old Commandant. The officer keeps the apparatus alive, and even though the method of execution is barbaric, he finds no flaws or faults in it; he is in awe of it. It is his life's blood to fulfill the dreams and carry on the traditions set down by the old Commandant. The officer is a disciple; the old Commandant is "God," and the officer perpetuated the apparatus in blind faith. It is almost a religious experience for him.

When an outsider is sent to witness this queer and inhumane procedure, the officer is proud, yet at the same time apprehensive of his motives; perhaps he has been sent to do away with the apparatus. The officer's leeriness turns to outright paranoia when the explorer disapproves of the technique of execution. He fears the worst: that the outsider will put an end to his carefully cultivated and nurtured beliefs (brain washing? over-zealousness? recognition?), or will he applaud the incomprehensible effort of the officer? At any rate, the explorer witnesses the entire horrible act and does not form an opinion either way. In essence, I believe that Kafka is trying to get across the fact that the mere questioning of the old Commandant's ideals is not to be *thought* of, let alone *discussed* in a critical way. This can be compared to those diehard traditionalists that will hang onto old archaic beliefs and church dogma because it is wrong to devise your own rules where the Almighty is concerned. (The "Almighty" can be the old Commandant in this instance.) The officer could not bear to hear the apparatus of the old Commandant criticized, and to prove his loyalty, he gives up his own existence. And his beloved machine turned on him, ironically, to prove that his devotion and love (obsession?) for the old Commandant and the apparatus had been in vain. In the final analysis, he had wasted many years of being totally faithful and submissive to the machine. Could this be a direct link to the relationship that Franz had with his father? Were all of his efforts in vain? Did he wish and hope for some tiny glimmer of recognition from his domineering abusive father? He would do almost anything to please him. Perhaps Franz elevated his father to the "supreme being" level (the old Commandant? the apparatus?).

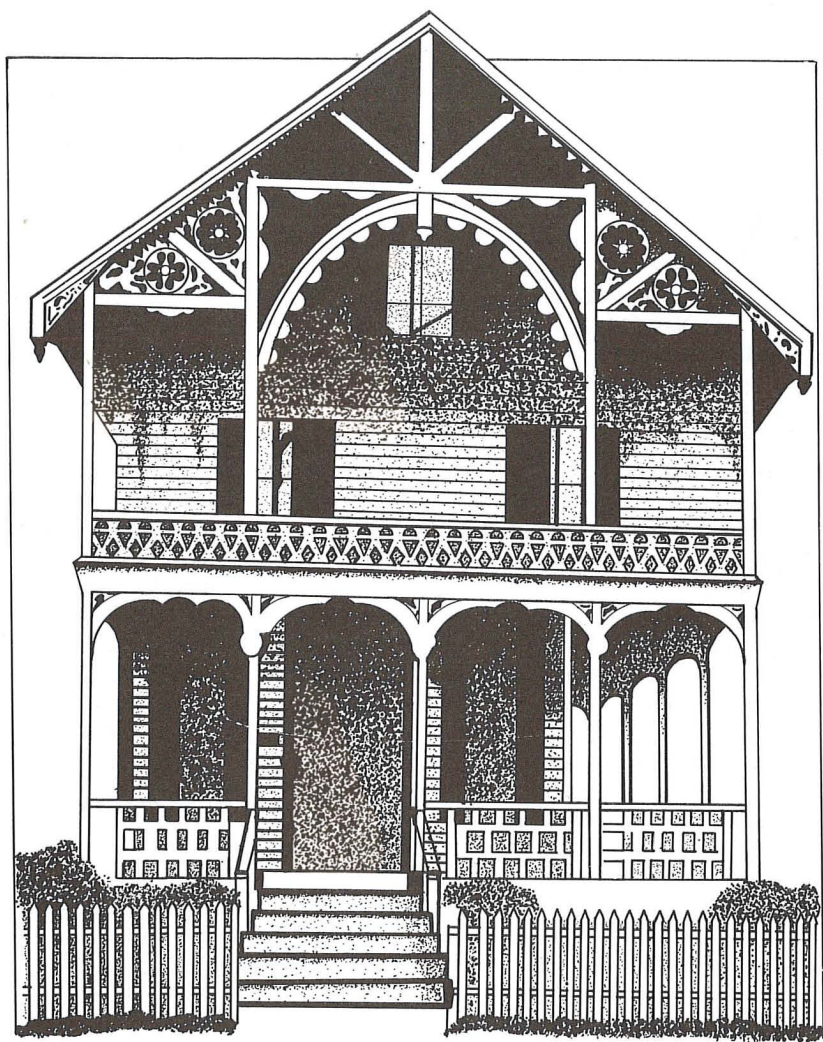
The idea here could be that a person can have false hopes and dreams, but in their own reality they are true. Man's complex nature allows for learning from mistakes, yet how can we learn about justice when we feel that punishment was

thrust upon us for no good cause? And furthermore, who is the true judge of right and wrong? Who should administer justice, and what qualifies that person to do so? We are our own victims, and the inflictor is some unseen force. Apparently, that is just the way human beings operate — sometimes on an animal level. Humans, possessing certain animal characteristics, (we are animals, yet are capable of cognitive reasoning) are able to get back to the basics, the driving force of our own nature, which has been manifested and *overly* cultivated to the point of inability to deal and comprehend on a gut level. Too much mechanization is not good; we lose track of our innate instincts and lose touch with the simple things in life. If everything is done for us, we would soon collapse from our own atrophied, useless minds and bodies. This must not happen. Also, we cannot depend on old, useless traditions that can only harm if they are not productive at the same time. This is stifling and closed-minded and does not allow for openness and re-evaluation of ideas. Perhaps then, this was the idea of the hidden character, the new Commandant. He realized that the apparatus was cruel; it *did* make mistakes, etc. What better way to phase out the apparatus, see its demise and, at the same time, the demise of the person who wanted the hideous machine perpetuated — all in one fell swoop?

The only person, I believe, that was capable of being unbiased and was totally understanding of everyone involved was the explorer (the outsider). And, thank God, he could walk away from the experience but not totally unscathed.

In conclusion: although I may not be able to decipher Kafka completely (perhaps not at all), I do see into his suffering as a basis for his confused, complicated writing. I *do like* Kafka's writing a great deal, because it is enticing, perhaps like a crowd drawn to an accident scene; sometimes we just can't help but want to *look*.





A HOUSE FOR BARB  
Dani Artman

# TANGLED TENORS

by Nancy Wells

The arias at La Scala leave the crowd spellbound over the tonal perfection they have just witnessed. A patron whispers to another, "We have just heard the World's Greatest Tenor." "I know," she replies. "Isn't he grand?" Simultaneously, some distance away, a patron of The Met is heard making the same remark. How can this be? Can one individual be in two places at the same time? Certainly not; but *both* of the "World's Greatest Tenors" can be. The world of opera has been trying unsuccessfully for years to determine whether Luciano Pavarotti or Placido Domingo should receive this accolade. After all the discussing, opining, elaborating, and concluding, the question remains open in heated debate. No definitive answer has yet to be given. The accolade of "World's Greatest Tenor" is justly merited by both men. Pavarotti and Domingo share similar family backgrounds, brilliant talents and careers with the keen business instinct to capitalize on these.

In childhood, Pavarotti and Domingo shared similar lifestyles and family environments. Each was born in a large European city to a family of musical background. Both men lived in an apartment complex with their parents and a younger sister. Today each man is the proud father of three children. Luciano Pavarotti was born in Modena, Italy, to a baker and his wife. His father was an amateur tenor who was considered quite talented by those who knew the craft. Luciano was brought up singing in the church choir, producing the lighthearted quality now attributed to him. His younger sister, Gabriella, often accompanied him. Today he shares his life and riches with his wife and three daughters. Placido Domingo was born in Madrid, Spain, to a famed "zarzuela" singer. Zarzuela is a form of operatta that mixes musical numbers with spoken dialogue. Placido was soon singing with his mother in the zarzuela and producing the rich tones for which he is noted. His younger sister, Mari Pepa, often felt overshadowed but proud of her older brother. Placido brags openly about his wife and three sons and the importance they've shared in his life. The parallels in upbringing have helped each man develop a unique musical style which the opera world applauds.

Talent flows freely from these two individuals. Besides their obvious musical blessings, they are endowed with talents in other areas. To their credit, each has sung with a top entertainer and recorded a hit selling album. Uncannily, each recorded an album of popular religious songs in 1976. In the autumn of 1968 both men made their U.S. debut, and later starred in The Met's biggest production in Central Park. Different people and publications have at one time proclaimed each man as the "World's Greatest Tenor." Neither Pavarotti nor Domingo profess to have any interest in this title and agree that Caruso holds the honor. They share excess energy on up-and-coming new, young stars and maintain primary allegiance to the art.

Pavarotti is gifted, not only with his "high C" tenor voice but is an accomplished painter. Praiseworthy mention has been given to his artwork at many galleries. His voice has mixed company with Frank Sinatra and sold many



albums nationwide. Paravotti's Greatest Hits has touched the musical soul of many, leaving them yearning for more. In November of 1968, he made his debut at The Met in La Bohe'me. In 1980 he conquered Rigoletto in Central Park among a crowd of avid listeners. San Francisco Opera boss Kurt Adler proclaimed him as the "World's Greatest Tenor" to all who would listen.

Domingo is an accomplished pianist. His secondary talent was developed, along with his voice, in his formative years. The deep rich tones he sings have made him a star in over eighty various roles. John Denver combined his voice with Placido Domingo's and a top selling album resulted. Domingo's My Life For A Song recording took the music industry by storm. In September 1968, he made his debut at The Met in Adriana Le Couvreur, four weeks earlier than expected. In 1981, Central Park featured Domingo in Tosca, drawing a record audience. Newsweek magazine dubbed him "The World's Greatest Tenor."

Titles aside, each man is a credit to his profession. Time, talent, and energy have turned each man into a business within himself. Keen instinct and management have made each of these tenors a multi-million-dollar business and a household name. They are known throughout all parts of the developed world.

Their careers have been launched by a carefully regulated plan of publicity-getting techniques. First, they have capitalized on the "rivalry" which exists between them. Each has reaped the benefits of media exposure through talk show appearances and public promotion. They have lent their names and faces for advertising commercial products. Each has appeared on varied television shows, retaining high salaries and increased visibility.

Both have succeeded in using publicity for their own purposes, as no opera star has since Maria Callas. Pavarotti has appeared on the Johnny Carson Show, Tom Snyder Show, Today Show, and was documented in a Sixty Minutes segment. ABC network highlighted a television special which co-hosted Pavarotti and Loretta Lynn. Pavarotti has often made snide comments regarding Domingo, which focuses attention on the Pavarotti-Domingo rivalry. Domingo has been a frequent guest on the Johnny Carson Show and other local talk show programs. He has hosted The Muppet Show and been a guest star on a Carol Burnett special. His special with John Denver was a huge television success and became a top selling soundtrack. Domingo is often jealous of attention paid to Pavarotti, when both are appearing in the same city. He expresses negative sentiment at the mere mention of Pavarotti's name.

Some observers feel Pavarotti and Domingo have paid a price, taking publicity for its own sake. Their constant need to upstage one another lacks dignity in a serious art. The publicity they have created, however, has made each man a celebrated figure, business giant, and financial genius.

As each career soars to new heights, the basic foundation remains the same. Family ties and background have drawn them together in a web of unity. The talent and energy they exert cannot be ignored. Career comparisons unveil two stars which shine equally bright among opera's peers. Keen financial minds mesh in the desire to create a growing business. It is an empire that has been completely saturated with challenge, creativity, and talent. All of these traits



flow freely from different angles in each man's life. Whether it's "bravo" for Pavarotti or "magnífico" for Domingo, the accolade is well deserved. The two "World's Greatest Tenors" prove themselves time and time again. Aren't they grand!

## **THE CONVERSATION**

**by Sally Reeves-Varty**

The conversation took off without major drawbacks that could so  
Beset the flight of any turbo prop;  
It continued to rise steadily amid the banked clouds  
And maintain a steady altitude for quite some time.  
A low secretive hum resounded through the cockpit until  
A sudden storm caused the engines to sputter;  
Aghast at the lashing fury of the elements and  
Unnerved by the renewed ferocity of the wind,  
Hearts lost hope and the plane began  
Its slow spiralled descent — a photographic time warp of fear  
Which seemed to hold all in frozen suspense,  
Until at last emerging from the clouds a  
Blaze of sunlight streamed  
And with a sudden focusing on the situation in hand,  
The plane was pulled out of its dovetailed spin grazing mountain tops  
And with that the engines began their consistent humming once more,  
This time with an eye for the storm.



MORISSEY DEFINED?  
Mark Falls

# FADING SHADOWS

by Julie A. Brown

Darin was born on a farm on the outskirts of town beyond the creek and woods to the north where the land smells damp and where boys can play for hours. McAlisters have always lived here. William D. McAlister was raised here, as was Darin's father, Will Jr. Last year Darin's father put new white siding over the old house's cracked and faded asbestos. Darin thought it looked good compared to the weathered barn and the peeling white chicken coop. He had been told that the farm would someday be his, along with the house, barn, chicken coop and shed.

In all, their farm stretches to sixty acres with ten of that unused. Here, thistles grow as tall as Darin's nine-year-old shoulders, their blue tops dance in the afternoon breeze. Darin named this place the horsefield, but it's not used for horses anymore. In the center of the horsefield stands a giant maple tree where he often climbs to spy on everything that goes on for miles around. From his tower he feels as free as a bird perched on high.

As usual, Darin woke this morning to the low crowing of his pet rooster, Charlie.

"It's Saturday," Darin mumbled to himself. "I don't have to get up early today, Charlie." The house was cold and still, only a faint light filtered in through the low window that separated his bed from his little brother's. Ricky's blankets were pulled tight against his chubby, four-year-old cheeks and his thumb was shoved in his mouth. Darin stared at the shadow his small frame made and timed the steady rise and fall. Ricky and Darin were nothing alike. Darin resembled their mother with the same brown hair, hazel eyes, olive skin and thin features. Ricky looked more like their father with his blonde hair and husky build. Darin remembered how his mother used to tell him that he was her boy and Ricky was his dad's.

His mind wandered as he dreamed about his mother. She was so pretty and nice he thought. She never complained when he used to climb in bed with her in the early morning while his dad was outside doing chores. As he thought about her, shadows in the room seemed to grow larger and leaped toward him. One shadow fell across the bed almost touching him. Darin's heart raced as he clutched the quilt over his head.

"Momma!" he cried. Suddenly the shadow faded as the darkness was slowly eaten up by the morning sun. As he lay in bed, he fingered the satin on the quilt's edge that his mother made for him last winter. Darin remembered how long it took her to sew the pretty star designs. His stomach started to hurt a little, and a tear came to his eye as he pictured her in his mind again.

"Momma?" he asked aloud. "Momma, are you there?" He bowed his head the way she had taught him when he was Ricky's age and softly whispered, "I miss you, Momma." He then recalled what she told him when Grandpa McAlister died. She told him that the dead are never far from the living. One just can't see them or touch them, but if you believe, then they are always with you.



"I believe you, Momma," he whispered.

"Dar-in," Ricky whispered in a husky voice. "You 'wake?"

"Yeah, I'm awake."

"Whatcha doin'?"

"None of your business," Darin answered. He didn't like Ricky asking so many questions.

"Wanna git up and eat?" Ricky asked as he kicked his covers off the bed and tumbled down to the hardwood floor with them.

"Yeah, I'll be down in a minute."

"Okay," Ricky said as he padded off down the hall towards the stairs. His pajamas were loose and wrinkled, and his curly blonde hair bobbed as he trotted off. Darin rolled over and could hear the clinking of dishes in the kitchen downstairs. Aunt Rose was fixing breakfast. Darin remembered when she came to live with them after his mother died in the accident. Darin liked his Aunt Rose because she seemed to understand him. When he came home from school, she sometimes treated him with apple slices sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar or homemade cookies and milk. Darin liked to listen to her sing church hymns as she did the housework. Her big aproned middle would rise up and down while she sang. She added a lot of cheer to the household, although Darin thought that she couldn't replace his mother -- no one could.

"Guess I better get up, too," Darin said to himself. He quickly slipped on a pair of socks, jeans and a sweatshirt and scrambled downstairs to the kitchen.

"Morning, Darin," Rose said. She flipped over a couple of steaming pancakes on the griddle. "How'd you sleep?"

"I wanna 'nother pancake!" Ricky interrupted.

"As soon as Darin gets his, Child," Rose said. "My, you boys like to eat. When your dad comes in, I want you to be real quiet. He's in one of his moods this morning, and I don't want you bothering him. He'll be in in a minute."

Outside, Will stared ahead at the silage unloader as he sat on a stack of bales in the barn. The air was colder this morning, and he could see his breath. His ungloved, calloused hands and muscular arms were crossed as he thought about his wife Angelia. He remembered when they were married ten years ago. Although they were both nineteen, she had looked about fifteen he thought. Times were tough then, but not as tough as now. Will recalled the day his father suffered a stroke which had left him bedridden and unable to farm. Angelia had insisted she care for his father, so they moved in. She cared for him until he died five years ago.

Will kept his gaze on the machine as it pumped the feed into the wagon. All of the times Angelia sat beside him in this barn flashed before him. He thought of one particular evening. It was almost dark and the lights in the barn were already turned on, creating a soft glow onto the path which led to the door. He was surprised to see her waiting for him on the bales. Her hazel eyes danced as she smiled and patted the straw beside her. The straw crushed beneath their bodies and the sweet smell of silage flowed around them... Will shivered and leaped from the bales to turn off the machine.

"No time for dreaming," he mumbled to himself. "I've got too much to do." He walked to the loader wagon, glanced back at the bales, then climbed onto the tractor with one leap.

When he was finished with chores, he came in the house through the back door and stamped into the kitchen. His blonde hair was windblown, and his cheeks were almost as red as the barn. He towered over Darin and Ricky like a huge lumberjack with his red plaid shirt and dirty coveralls. Darin thought he looked tired. It seemed like he always looked tired or mad lately. Darin hadn't seen him smile in a long time -- at least not since the accident. He would just come and go without much notice of Darin and Ricky. When they did see him, Darin thought his lips looked like they were glued shut, because they were fixed tightly together. His eyebrows made a "V" shape towards his nose, and Darin noticed that he had that same look this morning when he came in.

"Darin," Will said. "I've got plenty of chores for you today so don't go off playing where I can't find you."

"Can I help, too, Daddy?" Ricky asked. Maple syrup stuck to his chin as he licked his plate clean.

"Oh Ricky, don't do that, dear," Rose said. "Here, let Aunt Rose wipe that now."

"What kind of chores?" Darin asked, fearful of what he was in for. Usually when his dad mentioned chores, he was in for a full day's work.

Will didn't answer right away. As he took off his coveralls and removed his boots, he thought about the money the farm needed. Heavy rains flooded his fields and wiped out their harvest, so money was tight. "I'll be butchering the roosters today," he said. "I'm going to need your help when I'm through." He washed his big rough hands in the kitchen sink and wiped them on a dishtowel, leaving black stains all over it.

Darin thought, "If I did that I'd be in for it." His heart sank as he thought of Charlie, his pet chicken. Charlie was hatched right in their kitchen last spring. Darin had found an abandoned egg in the center of an old tire by the toolshed, so his mother said that he could bring it in to keep it warm. Together they sat in front of the stove to wait for the perfectly shaped egg to do something. His mother turned the oven on low and placed the egg on a towel in a pan to keep it warm. They both got excited as a tiny chick pecked its way out of the shell. Darin fell in love with the fuzzy yellow chick right from the start, and his mom let him name it Charlie. That chick followed Darin everywhere as if he were its mother.

"Dad, you won't have to butcher all the chickens, will you?" Darin asked, fearful of what would happen to Charlie. He knew his dad never liked the idea of keeping a good source of food for a pet. He always said that a boy should have a dog or cat for a companion -- not a chicken. Darin remembered his father getting mad at his mom for letting him keep the chick in the house until it was big enough to go out with the others.

"Son, you know we butcher the roosters every fall for meat and keep the best hens for laying," Will said, his face getting tighter than before.

"Yeah," Darin thought for a minute, "But what about Charlie?"

"Well, Charlie's a rooster, and that's what roosters were intended for. I just can't spare every creature you take to, Son. If I did, then sooner or later you'd be making one of the calves a pet and we'd have to keep it, too."

Suddenly Darin wasn't hungry anymore, and his stomach ached again. He got up from the table and walked over to the coatrack, grabbed his jacket from beside his father's coveralls and headed for the door.



"Dress warm, Hon," Aunt Rose said. "There's a chill in the air." He started out the door when he overheard his father and Rose talking, so he hid himself around the corner where they wouldn't see him. With his face against the door, he could see them at the kitchen table.

"Will, you shouldn't be so hard on the boy. After all, he hasn't been feeling very well lately," Rose said to her brother as she bent towards him.

"The boy has to grow up sometime, Rose," Will said as he swallowed a pancake almost whole.

"Yes, but shouldn't you think about how much he misses Angelia? After all, it's only been seven months since the accident. I worry about that boy. He tosses and turns in his sleep all night."

"Doesn't anyone care about how I feel?" Will said as he banged his fork down on the wooden table. "I'm sick and tired of that boy wandering around here dreaming all the time. It's not healthy -- not when we have a farm to run."

"I know, Will. You've been hiding your feelings just like that boy; only you're angry and he's hurt," Rose said.

"You're damn right I'm angry. I'm mad! She left me alone with all this work and two kids to bring up by myself." Just then his face turned a deep red, as he held his hands over his face. He couldn't believe what he just said. After all, he missed Angelia as much as Darin. He just didn't know what to do anymore.

Darin held his breath as he stood posed behind the door. He heard the whole conversation. With one deep breath he hurried out the back door and said, "He doesn't understand, Momma." Kicking the damp leaves out of his path, he crossed the yard to the barn. Overhead, clouds hung low and gray. The air pinched his ears so he pulled his collar up and shoved his hands deep in his jeans. He glanced towards the chicken coop and noticed the roosters and hens inside. A flock of geese flew overhead, trying to keep their "V" shape. It reminded him of his dad's eyebrows, and he frowned as he listened to their honking which echoed in the morning air. His eyes followed their black jagged shape as it disappeared completely behind the woods.

"Lucky geese," he hollered. "Fly far away from here!" He ran through the leaves until he reached the chicken coop. The wire that surrounded the enclosure was reddened from rust, so his fingers became stained as he poked them through the wire. Pressing his nose against the screen, he called out, "Charlie! Where are you, Charlie?" White feathers and white droppings lay on the floor like a carpet. He sniffed, wiping his sleeve across his nose.

"Dad just can't kill Charlie," Darin said. "Momma, you promised I could keep him forever." The chickens clucked and strutted around the cage like queens as he looked from left to right. "Where are ya, Charlie?" He clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth, while several chickens scooted around the coop. Their tails were chewed in places and their beaks bobbed up and down as they collected kernels of yellow nuggets. Suddenly, a proud Charlie strutted from behind the door. "There you are, you rascal. I've got to hide you." He opened the door of the coop and tried to grab Charlie's white back, but it was too fast for him. Just as Darin reached for him again, he heard the back door slam. He squinted his eyes to catch the bent figure of his father walking toward the toolshed. Darin couldn't see his father's face to tell what kind of mood he was in, but his gloved hands were held in tight fists at his sides.



"Will!" Aunt Rose yelled from the doorway, but he wouldn't answer. His long legs moved his hard body faster, and he disappeared for several minutes inside the shed. Once inside, Will took down the axe that hung from two nails on the wall. He tied on a white apron; as he did he remembered Angelia again. She had made the apron for him several years ago. Will's hands began to shake as he stroked the axe's fine wood grain. His eyes itched as he smoothed down the wrinkles on the apron. "Why do I always get so angry?" he asked himself.

Meanwhile, Darin was still standing in the entrance of the coop when that sick feeling rushed into his stomach again. Beads of sweat broke out on his forehead, dampening his hair. Suddenly he saw his father exit the shed wearing the old white apron and carrying an axe. He felt helpless as his dad approached the coop.

"Dad, please don't kill him. Please let me keep him. I'll take care of him and do extra chores -- anything! Just don't kill Charlie!"

Will stopped in front of the door and motioned Darin to move out of the way. Darin's head felt light as he thought back to that day last spring: the stove, Momma's smiling face, warmth, the new chick. He could visualize her face as she held the tiny chick in the palm of her hand. He stepped back with tears running down his cheeks. His father's blue coveralls bulged from his strong arms as he grabbed for the bird. Missing the first time, he took a second swipe. This time he caught its neck between his fingers. The rooster let out a loud noise. Darin stared as his father held it by its bony yellow feet. Plopping the white-winged fowl down on the stump with one motion, he raised the axe high in the air...

"Nooo!" screamed Darin. "Please, Dad, no!" He couldn't bear to watch so he ran as fast as he could behind the barn to the horsefield. His heart was beating fast, and his face felt clammy. The pit of his stomach churned as he let loose his breakfast with one violent retch. Then he cried saying, "Momma, Momma, I need you, Momma! Why did you have to leave me?" From somewhere in Darin's memory, a scene was surfacing. Over and over like a skipped recording he watched as a truck crashed into his mother's blue Impala. She was killed instantly. "Momma?" he asked. He wanted to believe she could hear him, but he just didn't know for sure. With tears streaming down his face, he climbed high up in the maple. By now he could hardly see the fields and woods through his tears, but he couldn't stop crying. "Now Charlie's gone too," he cried. Just then he heard a rustling in the weeds beneath the tree. His face was buried deep between his knees, so he couldn't see his father standing at the bottom of the tree.

"Darin," Will called. "Come down."

"Go away," Darin cried. "I don't want to talk to you!"

"Come on down from there, Son, before you fall," Will said. His voice quivered slightly.

Darin opened his burning eyes and stared at the gray sky that seemed to engulf him. His father stood at the bottom of the tree with a flapping, winged chicken held in his arms. Darin couldn't believe it. His father didn't do it! As he looked down below, his foot slipped, almost making him lose his grip. "Momma," Darin said weakly. "Momma, I... I... have to say goodbye now." Darin knew that his mother would always be with him, but he also knew that he needed his father too.

Will raised his face towards Darin's and their eyes met. For the first time since Angelia's death, he felt a closeness to his son. "Darin," he said. "I hope you'll forgive me. I guess we both miss your mother. I need you, Darin, so come down now, okay?"

Darin thought his father looked strong, yet gentle as he stroked the soft feathers on Charlie's back. Slowly he left his perch in the maple. As he reached out to touch his father's hand, he glanced back over the fields, then whispered "goodbye" to a shadow that slowly faded beyond the trees and creek out of sight.

## **ADVICE FOR MOTHER-TO-BE**

**by Julie A. Brown**

A precious root grows within.  
Tend carefully, young gardener,  
Unkept gardens wither, die.  
Discover refreshment in  
Tickling rain,  
Highlighting sunshine,  
Whishing breezes.  
As seasons shift, caress the mound —  
A muffled bump is your reply.  
Speak quietly, sing sweetly, rock gently  
This small flower,  
Soon a rosebud will appear,  
Its petals pink or violet.



**PRIMITIVE ART DESIGN**  
**Mike Wilhelm**



# MENTAL CASES

## First Place Honors

### by Debbie Wright

Wilfred Owen wrote that "My subject is war, and the pity of war. The poetry is in the pity." Because of this attitude, Owen's works do not speak of glory, or honor, or power, but of what he envisioned war to really be, the pity of death, horror, and the destruction of mind and body. "Mental Cases" by Wilfred Owen is a brutal display of this poet's hatred and sorrow in relation to war and what it costs. This poem discusses those soldiers who become insane because of the countless and horrible deaths they observed while fighting in World War I. Throughout "Mental Cases," which is, in itself, a crude and distasteful term, Owen maintains a bitter and harsh tone to complement this image. However, there is also an underlying tone of sadness, helplessness, and even irony at the very end. The verse itself has no apparent rhyme and only a loose rhythm, but it has the natural flow of one man speaking to another, which is essentially the effect Owen intends to create. His theme is clear — war is horror, and terror, and death, and never leaves those who survive it in peace. Owen makes little use of hyperbole or understatement; his main techniques are the use of simile, metaphor, personification, and most importantly, descriptive phrases and word choices.

Owen begins with a very effective rhetorical question, "Who are these?" This grabs the reader's attention and gives the impression that these "mental cases" are often ignored and thrust to the edges of society to be avoided and forgotten. "Why sit they there in twilight?" also connects further with this and explains that these men are no longer a part of reality, but as the metaphor "purgatorial shadows" implies, they are in a state of limbo, waiting for death, yet trying to forget or be forgiven for their sins and the sins of others. They are not dead, but they are not living; they are somewhere in the middle, in twilight. In this first stanza, Owen concerns himself with the appearance of the insane. Descriptive and unusual words, such as "Drooping," "slob," "Gouged," "chasms," and "fretted sockets," all lend to the pathetic and terrible appearance of the men. The simile, "Baring teeth that leer like skulls teeth wicked," also describes their frightening and almost evil facial expressions with harsh diction. The alliteration and hardness of "stroke on stroke of pain" completes this image of brittleness and severity. Owen continues with intense imagery to indicate the men's misery, which is so evident it "swelters" from their hair and palms. The men he is describing are so disturbed, their extreme anguish and inner pain exhibit themselves through the men's exterior appearance. He labels them as "hellish" and asks why they suffer so.

The first line of stanza two answers this question with "These are the men the Dead have ravished." This statement is the center of the poem; its powerful imagery expresses the memories these men hold of the "Multitudinous murders they once witnessed" — the countless horrible deaths they observed and the visions of the dying men they cannot forget — the reason for their

insanity and despair. Owen proceeds with "Wading sloughs of flesh these helpless wander" adding to the idea that these insane are haunted by such images as crossing swamps of flesh. The vividness of "Treading blood from lungs that had loved laughter" describes the drowning and choking effect the memories of the dead have on the men. The personification of lungs indicates how healthy and happy they were before the war turned their own minds against them. Owen's choice of the words "Batter," and "shatter" is an excellent method of retaining the harsh and brittle tone of the poem. The phrase, "carnage incomparable, and human squander," indicates Owen's thoughts of the subject of the unmatched slaughter involved with war, and its waste of human life. "Rucked too thick for these men's extrication" relays the fact that even when the fighting is over, those involved can never be free, or extricated, from the horror.

Because they cannot be free from the images of death, "Their eyeballs shrink tormented back into their brains." And again words like "tormented," "blood-back," "plucking," "scourging," and "Pawing" set the dark, depressing, and crazed mood. Owen implies that because the insane suffer so, neither sunlight, nor night, nor the simile of dawn breaking "open like a wound that bleeds afresh," can bring them relief. He then returns to the appearance of the "mental cases" and describes the state of seriously mentally ill individuals exactly with the alliteration of "hilarious, hideous" and "set-smiling" grins which are as false as those that corpses wear. Owen ends "Mental Cases" with the vivid image of the insane displaying their desire to be free of their torment and at the same time attempting to release their anger against those who "dealt them war and madness" or seeking help from them which will never come. The term "brother" in the phrase "Snatching after us who smote them" is used in the ironic sense that brotherly love and caring, in this case, can lead to betrayal and mental anguish.

Wilfred Owen's "Mental Cases" may not be beautiful or even pleasant, but it is real. His skillful use of similes, metaphors, personification, and descriptive words and phrases all contribute to the general harsh and bitter tone of the poem and make it vivid and unrelenting. "Mental Cases" is a plea for sanity, and it can hopefully do what Owen wanted it to do — warn.



THE GIRL  
Carol Mahaffy



# REFLECTIONS THROUGH MODERN ART

by Cheryl Lorence

When I had registered for my classes and received my schedule, I knew the day was finally here — I had made it to college! I was excited to begin all of my classes, that is, except for Modern Art — Man and Society. "Modern art," I thought to myself, "yuck!" However, this class was going to fulfill my humanities credit. "How bad can one semester be?" I rationalized and decided to go in with an open mind.

The first few days of class I was confronted with Neo-Classicism, or Romantic Classicism, and such great artists as Jaques-Louis David, Gilbert Stuart, Antonio Canova, and Benjamin West. This was extreme realism down to the slightest detail: respectable. Maybe I would enjoy this class after all. Isn't it funny how at first we seem to enjoy the things that do not pose a challenge to our imaginations? (Realism is recognizable, therefore not a challenge.)

This was not to be the case, as I was taken from this wonderful world of realism and rudely shoved into a new world, the art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Katherine Kuh put it well in her essay, "Modern Art": "The art of our century has been characterized by shattering surfaces, broken color, segmented compositions, dissolving forms, and shattered images." My first taste: Impressionism. In this new movement, everything seemed a bit off-kilter. It was quite a shock to my system. However, as the class went on, and my instructor had such a fervor for it, I remembered my open mind. In time I came to appreciate the works of Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Auguste Renoir, and Claude Monet. I began to accept their pieces such as Impression Sunrise, Luncheon on the Grass, and Ballet Rehearsal as true works of art.

The next stop on our "journey through art" was Neo-Impressionism, or "pointillism." I have always had a passion for the work of George Seurat, so I enjoyed this movement. I found it intriguing. Post-Impressionism and Symbolism again took me by surprise. The artists of this movement took what I thought to be perfectly respectable objects and twisted them in such hideous ways as to make them seem almost obscene. The paint was applied thickly and in such a carefree manner that it seemed to "cry out" from the canvas.

Yes, I was pessimistic at first, but I quickly learned to appreciate, respect, and even enjoy some of this modern art. Slowly I was beginning to understand what art was all about. Though I would never buy one of the "Action Paintings" by Pollock and hang it in my living room, I have grown to appreciate all forms of art.

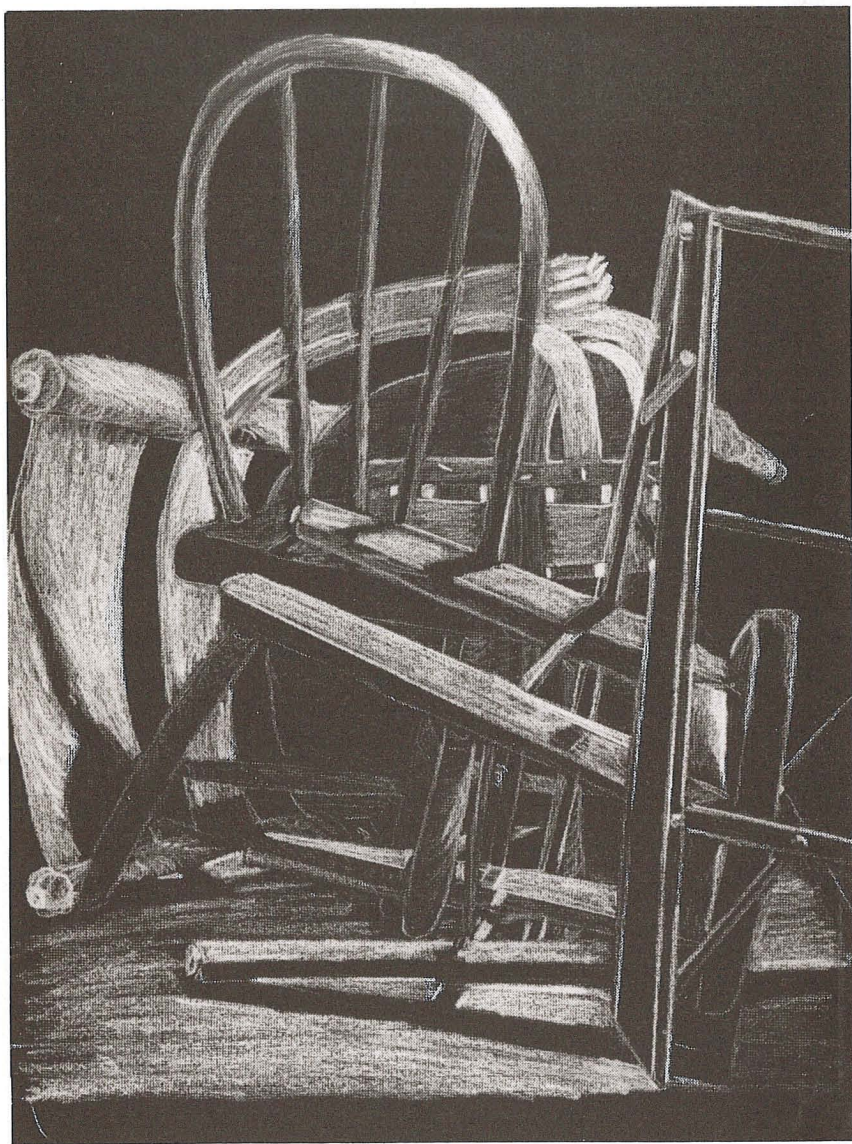
In fact, the movement I hated the most is now my favorite. The radical paintings of the Cubistic movement, I thought, were works of madmen — literal "psychos." Picasso, Braque, and Duchamp were among the most deranged. I have now changed my views. Whether I like the individual piece or not, I realize that modern art such as Cubism, Surrealism, or Abstraction is a form of universal communication. The artist is giving us a rare treat, showing us the way in which he interprets his individual reality.

I never knew I could learn as much as I have about others as well as myself through art. It has been an essential force in my life, not only as my major, but as a tool by which I have labored and learned. I believe that art is for everybody; it holds something special for each and every one of us. All we have to do is look with unbiased eyes and an open mind. We are able then to put ourselves in the place of the artist and actually see with his vision through his eyes. I believe that this joining of visions and imaginative interpretations is the one true point of all art.

## **TALL TOWERS**

**by Julie A. Brown**

"Rewrite," the editor said.  
I cringe.  
Revision is like  
A child's tower  
Of building blocks.  
When it is knocked down  
He cries, "I can't  
Make it the same!"  
Then block by block a new  
Tower is creatively  
Reconstructed.  
Revision is rebuilding —  
Different, unique,  
Better than the original.  
Rebuild those tall towers,  
Making them reach  
To the sky.



OLD FRIENDS  
Ingeborg Elstermann



## LONELY WITH TIME

by Theresa M. Wawrzyniak

*Old and grey lay in a heap,  
dreams of youth in his sleep.  
Memories of childhood are all he holds,  
when he's lonely, grey and old.*

"Mama," I said.

"Yes dear," she replied.

"Mama, are we going to Grandpa's and Grandma's house today?" I asked, already knowing the answer I would receive.

"Why, of course, we are. You know we go there every Saturday. Now run along and get yourself ready, and be sure to wear something nice," she answered.

"Wear something nice" at age ten meant to me that there would be no kickball tournaments, death-defying tree climbs, or courageous cornfield journeys. No, after Grandpa's second bad fall, everything had changed, especially when he went to live at the Medical Center.

The outside of the Medical Center was deceiving; its soft green lawn and cool tan walls tricked the unknowing visitor into entering its large glass doors. The inside was similar to the outside in its neatness. The walls were clean, and the floors were shiny, but the air was filled with the strong smell of medication and disinfectants. Although everything was clean and brightly painted, sadness was everywhere. Old people lay in their rooms moaning with pain or sat in their wheelchairs with lonely faces. I wondered where their grandchildren were and why they did not come for a visit to cheer them up. I tried to smile at them when I walked past, hoping they would smile back, but usually there was only a blank face response.

Saturday after Saturday I visited Grandpa at the Center. In the beginning the visits were almost like seeing him at his house. Grandpa's room was in the south wing. Here sitting tall and proud, the men played poker and the women politely chatted back and forth while they quilted. The patients in the south wing wore street clothes, because they often took walks outside.

After Grandpa had another stroke, he was moved to the west wing. Grandpa didn't dress in street clothes that much anymore and had to be pushed to the visiting area in a wheelchair. I wondered what it would be like to be pushed in a wheelchair whenever I went. The grey seat was anything but a throne, and the wheels constantly made a rhythmic click as they spun slowly over the seams in the floor. The sweet smells of my brother's flavored gum escaped into the air as we strolled along. I quickly breathed the sweetness, because I knew it wouldn't last forever. Just like Mother says, "Nothing can last forever, nor should we expect it to."

"What did you have for lunch today, Dad?" my mother would ask every visit. At first I couldn't understand why lunch was so important, but then I realized the question wasn't directly about lunch. Instead, it was a test of Grandpa's

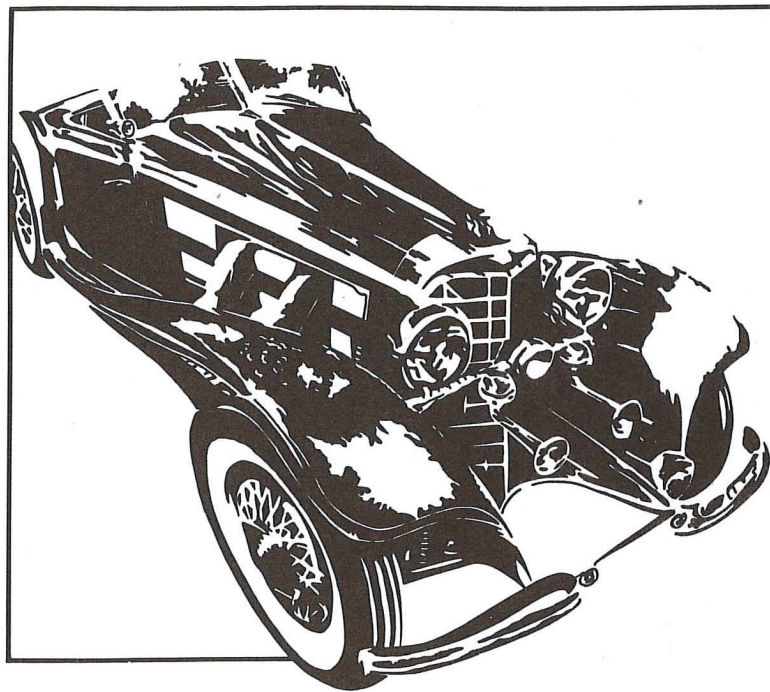
memory. It seemed odd to me that Grandpa couldn't remember details of the day before. These were the days that were so clearly printed in my mind. Grandpa instead remembered times of the past, and they were ever so vivid in his memory just like they had happened yesterday.

Grandpa hadn't been in the Center for long before he had the third and most damaging stroke, which resulted in a move to the north wing. Grandpa's new room was at the end of the hall by a set of large glass fire exit doors. Standing at the beginning of the hall by the nurses' station and looking down, one could see the warm rays of sunlight shine through the glass door and bounce off the glittering floor. I wanted so much to run down and soak up the warm rays into my already tanned arms, but the groans and cries from the rooms ahead caused me to become frightened, so I stayed close to my mother's protection.

I started to recognize a few of the patients in the north wing and became quite familiar with some, because Grandpa stayed there the longest. There was the lady in the wheelchair who undressed herself when the nurses were not looking and who also grabbed my arm when I walked by and would not let go. In the room across from Grandpa there was a woman who had a stuffed cat she called Puss-N-Boots that she talked to. She and others often came to sit by us when we visited Grandpa. Mom said they were only lonely and wanted to talk to someone who cared.

Saturday after Saturday we visited Grandpa; he slowly got worse. He would have to be reminded several times during a visit whom he was talking to. I watched Grandpa slowly die, and I watched other old people die who had no one to tell them how important they were even if they were old. Was Shakespeare with his grandpa when he wrote, "Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye. And where care lodgeth, sleep will never lie."?

I never went back to the Medical Center after Grandpa died, but I had learned at age ten what it was like to be old, crippled, and lonely day after day. I often wondered what these people had done wrong, and if I would end up the same way. The Medical Center has made me aware of time and makes me appreciate the gift of youth.



INK DRAWING  
Carol Mahaffy



# THE DESPAIR BEHIND HOPE

by Scott Klein

Post World War II America was a land rich with hope. It was the common belief of Americans of this period that America could overcome anything and, indeed, it did appear that way. America had assisted in the defeat of Nazi Germany and nearly single handedly defeated the Japanese. Through the Marshall plan, America had rebuilt Western Europe, and in the beginning of the decade, communist aggression had been checked in Korea. At home, economic prosperity reached new heights; the dream of America was strong. Things had never been better, and a common thread of optimism ran through the society. However, this thread of hope common to the society seems lost in the works of William Inge and Arthur Miller, two of the major playwrights of the period.

...Sometimes I wonder if it's not a lot easier to pioneer a country than it is to settle down in it. I come here and I still have to get used to the piano, and the telephone, and the gas stove, and the lace curtains at the windows, the carpets on the floor. All these things are still new to me. I dunno what to make of 'em. How can I feel I've got anything to give my children when the world's as strange to me as it is to them.

Thus one of Inge's men, Rubin, explains his problems with the changing nature of America and his own failure in the play The Darkness at the Top of the Stairs. It is an examination of man's alienation within his own family. In many ways, Inge's Rubin Flood is very much like Miller's Willie Loman in Death of a Salesman. We are allowed, through each play, to witness the final acts of destruction, the disintegration of a man's life. Rubin is a failure, first, in his profession and, second, in his home life. Rubin is a victim of progress; his job as a harness salesman is usurped by the automobile and now, in the play, he has become a man unable to cope. He is unable to cope with the world around himself. He is isolated, trapped in the corner of life with no way out.

The central character, as the play is presented to us, is not Rubin but his wife Cora. Like Rubin, Cora is the victim of loneliness. She tries to replace what her husband will not give her with what her children cannot provide. Because of the nature of Rubin's work, Cora's only real companionship comes from her children. It is because of this strong relationship between mother and children that Rubin feels alienated within his own family. This conflict sets up Sonny, the oldest son, as a competitor for the position of head of the household, creating a subtle Oedipus problem which is resolved when Sonny commits suicide.

Sonny's sister, Renee, follows in the tradition of Laura Wingfield in Tennessee Williams' Glass Menagerie. Renee is very self-conscious of a broken front tooth which contributes to her shyness. She escapes from the world through her piano. Indirectly, Renee is the catalyst for her brother's suicide. Distracted because she has disappeared from a party, Sonny kills himself rather

than go home and face his mother. Of course, Renee is at home. She left the party because she was overcome by her fear of people.

The darkness at the top of the stairs is the central symbol of this complex play. In terms of a set, it is represented by a stairway leading to a hallway which is semi-dark in the daytime and completely dark in the evening. The playwright means it to represent the fear that dwells within us all, sometimes easily sensed, other times lurking just below the surface, but never does it go away.

The destruction of the Flood family is complete. Through this destruction, Inge means to represent a world in a constant state of fluctuation and turmoil which is the flip side of the progress occurring in the fifties. Many times technology and new industries not only create jobs for some workers, but also jobs are taken away and men are displaced. Rubin's fear of the future was not without justification; in this new world he was obsolete. But even so, Rubin's plight might not have brought the family down if it had not been rotting from fear in the first place.

Yea, Marco! Eddie Carbone. Eddie Carbone. Eddie Carbone... Maybe he come to apologize to me. Heh, Marco? For what you said about me in front of the neighborhood? He knows that ain't right. To do like that? To a man? Which I put my roof over their head and my food in their mouth? Like in the Bible? Strangers I never seen in my whole life? To come out of the water and grab a girl for a passport? To go and take from your own family like from the stable — and never a word to me? And now accusations in the bargain! Wipin' the neighborhood with my name like a dirty rag! I want my name, Marco. Now gimme my name and we go together to the wedding.

"Give me my name," cried Eddie, Miller's main character in his play, A View from the Bridge. The backdrop of this play is a Brooklyn slum inhabited by Italians. The main character, Eddie Carbone, has problems which are sexual in nature and lead to guilt. In the end, this guilt leads to sin against the community: Eddie betrays his wife's relatives who are in the country illegally to the authorities.

This play also speaks of changes; Eddie is a victim of changing morality. At the center of this drama is Eddie's relationship with his niece whom he has taken in and cared for as his own. With the rejection of his wife, the girl becomes the object of Eddie's desire. It is the guilt resulting from this love that destroys Eddie. However, if this was the whole of Eddie's guilt, the drama would be uninteresting. The whole of his guilt is Eddie's homosexual attraction to his niece's suitor, Rodolpho.

Eddie is confused by the levels of moral law and his own sexuality. In the critical scene, a drunk Eddie acts on his feelings and kisses his niece. When Rodolpho protests, Eddie responds by trapping him and kissing him. The result of this is Eddie feels he is losing his masculinity and takes steps to preserve it. The threat, as he sees it, lays with Rodolpho. To eliminate the threat, he turns Rodolpho and his brother, Marco, over to the immigration authorities. In doing so, Eddie seals his fate by violating the Sicilian code of silence.

The conflict of this play is ancient law, or the code, versus modern or legislative law. In the end, ancient law brings justice to Eddie when he is killed in a knife fight with Marcos. As in all of Miller's plays, alienation and the loneliness of modern man is the underlying theme. Eddie's alienation and failure to understand the dual nature of codes of conduct and written law, and which of the two is more important to the individual, are his undoing.

As America plowed ahead into Huxley's Brave, New World, there were many questions about the human condition with which society seemed unwilling or unable to deal. Writers, specifically playwrights such as Miller and Inge, took it upon themselves to raise, then attempt to deal with, some of these problems.

Modern man is caught between the old and the new: old industry versus new industry, old law versus new law. Contrary to what we want to believe, often there are no easy solutions, and very often we become trapped. When we speak of change, we often speak in glowing generalities, ignoring the human condition and the cost to mankind. Miller and Inge, two of the major playwrights of the fifties, force their audiences to see change is not without cost. In this function, they contribute much to our understanding of ourselves. As we have seen, theatre of this period had a social conscience exploring issues inherent to that time and, indeed, all times. Isn't this the most important function of any art: to educate and force a realization of the human condition?

## RECOLLECTIONS

by Donna Webber

Her childhood recollections take her back to a farm in McCracken County, Kentucky — a land of long hot summers, bees, birds and flowers. Watching the little bees wander from clover to clover, then fly away to store the sweets, left her wondering where their home was. The songs of the birds sounded sweet as they flitted from chestnut to beech and from oak to maple. The tiny hummingbird held her in awe. She wished she could catch one. Summer was a certain sweet odor in the air that flew upon her cheeks and spurred the blooming of the goldenrod in the fields. The cricket's cry and the swarming of the Monarch were memories of summer. Summer brought the smell of marigold and the sharp scent of walnut husks that looked apple-green but left so brown a stain upon her hands. Growing up in McCracken County, Kentucky, encouraged an enthusiasm within her for life and left memories rich enough to treasure and share with her children-to-be.



Recollections of the still wet morning dew beneath her feet displaced the presence of the burning, tarred road that had made her feet ache. Vivid in her mind was the family who lived about a mile down the road, Mr. and Mrs. Hurt and their yellow-haired daughter, Linda. Mrs. Hurt seemed to always be humming "The Tennessee Waltz" as she worked. She couldn't understand how Linda's mother could be so happy — down on her hands and knees — mopping a floor. Mr. Hurt was a gentle and kind man who spent hours in his watermelon patch. Linda was a happy girl who was treated like a queen and sashayed around the house in circular skirts and white suede shoes. She left a trail of sweetness as she flitted about. Was it hand cream? Or was it perfume from Paris? It seemed to her that Linda was a very lucky girl for she had a trunk full of play clothes. In this trunk were dresses, skirts, hats, purses, gloves and even high-heeled shoes!

Now and then Linda would ask her and one or two of her eight sisters to play dress-up. Linda would dress each of them, and they would play follow-the-leader for what seemed like a few thousand hours. Most exciting was when the game led them on an adventure to Punch Hughes' General Store. On one side of the store were groceries, and on the other the air was filled with the scent of spices and flavoring extracts. The sweet smell of molasses was her favorite. Following the leader home, she clutched her shiny new silver snuffbox. Now she wouldn't have to stick her gum on the bedpost and worry that somehow it might get tangled in her hair. She had to save her gum; it might have been forever before she was blessed with another piece. Lots of laughs she remembers were made by imitating tobacco chewers and working up a nice brown spit with licorice root.

Weeks passed before she visited Linda again. She and her sisters were kept busy helping their mother wash hundreds and hundreds of fruit jars. Their little hands could easily fit in the mouths of the jars, unlike the hands of their mother. After, she hurried off to Linda's once again — sneaking away before her mother sent her to pick blackberries, hoe the garden, or dig for potatoes.

On this particular day she and her sisters did not play dress-up. Instead they had a music lesson with Linda's cousin, Loretta, as instructor. Loretta patiently tried to teach all the girls to yodel. Unlike her sisters and Linda too, she learned to yodel. Quite proud of herself, she went her way strutting. It was not until many years later, when in her twenties and married, that she learned from her father that this yodeling instructor was Loretta Lynn, none other than the "Coal Miner's Daughter." These recollections are treasured and shared by that little girl who is none other than my beloved mother.



ART OF FLIGHT  
Sheryl Forbes

# THE MOOSE DILEMMA

First Place Winner

by Cheryl Lorence

One day while shopping I saw "him." I had no money with me; I was just browsing around the mall with a friend. I began "people watching," a popular sport at such places, when I was rudely shoved into a nearby store by a throng of people passing by.

It was fate. I backed straight into a rack and on it was a forest-green sweater. This was no ordinary sweater because staring back at me was the silhouette of a big moose. It was love at first sight, for both of us, and once I saw that he had a matching skirt with miniature replicas of himself scattered along it, I knew I had to have that outfit. I even went so far as to envision the spot I would hang him in my closet.

After selecting the correct size, I grabbed him off the rack and rushed up to the cash register. As I took out my wallet to pay, I realized I did not have any money with me. In my excitement I had forgotten. I was crushed, not to mention red with embarrassment.

I apologized to the cashier; then, chin lowered and spirits broken, I took my moose outfit back to his former place on the rack. All the fun had gone out of the trip, so my friend and I went home. I was determined to return and claim that moose for my own. The next weekend I had scraped together enough money to accomplish my goal. I set out for the mall with a couple of friends to "hunt down" my moose.

When we arrived it was a mad dash to the store which was holding my moose captive. I looked on the rack where my moose had previously been located. When he was not there, I began to panic. I searched frantically. I flew from rack to rack with not a trace of my moose anywhere. By now I was near hysterics. My friends managed to calm me down enough to ask a salesperson about my missing moose.

I was soon informed that my moose had been on sale during the past week. It seems the moose combinations were very popular. If there were not any left on the racks, then they were all gone. My heart fell into my socks. I was devastated! Still, I would not give up. Even if I had to search every rack once more with a fine-tooth comb, I would find my moose.

Forty minutes and fifteen racks later, my friends gave up on me and went to do some more shopping. Still, my search went on. I just knew he had to be there somewhere. We were destined for one another.

Customers came and went without a second look from me. I had been through every rack, twice. My moose was gone for good. I was ready to burst into tears. Then "she" walked in. At first I did not notice her; she walked straight to the return counter and out of the corner of my eye I saw... my moose! Joy of joys. I ran over to the counter, tripping over my feet in my haste. People began to stare; I did not care. I pushed my way through a small group of people. It was laid out on the counter and it was all there. My moose sweater and the skirt to match. I held



my breath as I checked the size. Did I come all this way to find it would be too small? No! It was too good to be true; my size. Quickly I whipped out the correct amount of bills and placed them on the counter.

Every salesperson in the store that day applauded as my new purchase was handed to me. They were finally getting rid of me.

I was ecstatic. My moose and I were reunited at last. I met my friends at the car. We went out for a fine dinner at McDonald's to celebrate. Then I took my moose home to his reserved spot in my closet. We are now living together in mutual adoration. We have a good working relationship.

## UNTITLED

### by Cheryl Lorence

Crackle!

The fire roars; blazing  
I look into the flames  
Dancing tongues swirl about  
Yellow, orange, blue; curious

Snap!

Yellow against black; burning  
A blank look  
An outstretched hand  
I no longer feel the heat; closer

Pop!

The sacred dance again resumes; hypnotizing  
An evil presence  
Wanting to consume  
I'm drawn by the mystery

The fire now burns inside of me.

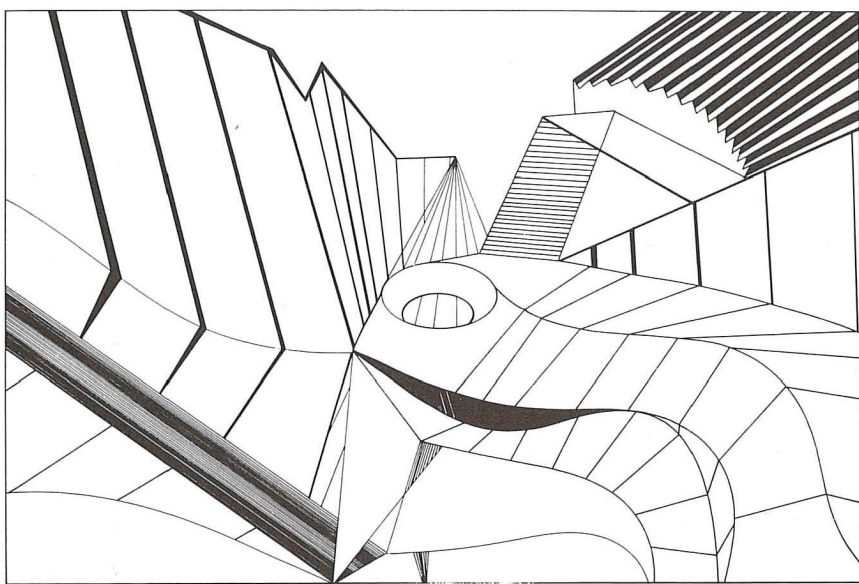


COMPOSED  
Mark Falls

**MOON MAGIC**  
**Second Place Honors**  
**by Marlene Taylor**

As a child I kept a moon chart  
On a piece of cardboard  
And went out on summer nights  
To record the shape of it  
Thus: C-moon D-moon O-moon  
Sometimes backwards C or D.  
That's how it looked to me.  
I collected them—  
Full moons gold in Autumn,  
Winter moons cold crystal,  
Lake moons dripping molten silver,  
City moons hiding behind buildings,  
Looming around corners,  
Moons playing hide-and-seek  
Behind gilt-edged clouds,  
Moons hung in tree branches  
Like Christmas baubles.  
Sometimes the moon made shadow-shows  
Of bedposts and branches  
On my bedroom wall.  
An ancient child,  
It offered me  
Its golden ball.





ABANDONED DWELLING  
Martin J. Rhein

# MY FRIEND, THE STRANGER

by Tracey Winkel

I wish I knew your name, though I know it doesn't matter because I'll never have cause to use it. But even so, during the brief time that I knew you, impressions were made that will last all through my life. You taught me a lot, dear stranger, about courage, love, hope, and friendship. I knew so much about you, but paradoxically we were strangers.

I remember when I met you at the hospital. I was a volunteer, full of cheer and strength, longing to give it all to the sad and lonely patients on 3-West at Port Huron Hospital. At the beginning of my Wednesday shift, I always took the time to go into each room and introduce myself to the new patients, explaining that I would occasionally pop in and out to change their water pitcher or bring them a newspaper. Your room was at the very start of my introductory tour, room 301. You received the most of my energetic cheerfulness, for as I went on down the hall my smile always lost its sparkle and became a small line across my face with the tired corners turning slightly up.

As I entered your room, our eyes met, and I felt a surge of emotion race through my body. Your eyes, your deep, dark, brilliantly sparkling eyes, told me more about you than an entire biography could have. I saw a cloudy happiness in those eyes, as if hidden behind a gray fog of lost hope. There is a woman of great emotion in this room, I had told myself, and I secretly longed to learn your story.

You never told me your story, but I did learn it. Some of it was told to me by the nurses. They told me you were dying of cancer, and that your baldness was due to extensive chemotherapy. You were young, only 28, and married less than three years. What they didn't tell me I learned from our Wednesday encounters and in your room, full of colorful flowers from well wishers and dozens of cards full of vain pleas to "get well soon."

Your visitors were few, but you never seemed to mind. You were content with the pictures of your baby that scattered the room and with your husband sitting silently in the corner. I watched him once, sitting in that imitation leather chair. He wasn't relaxed, you know. His eyes constantly darted from you to the I.V. to the door, as if at any moment he would jump to his feet and carry you out of that sterile hospital room to the outside world.

I know you missed being outside. The room didn't have much of a view, and you were in it for nearly three months. I saw your legs once when you asked me to help you to the bathroom. They were slender and tan, and I asked you if you spent much time at the beach. You looked at me with sad eyes and laughed, answering my insensitive question. The beach was a painful memory, much like the pain in your cancerous body as you tried to move to the bathroom.

I know the biggest reason that you wanted to get out was to spend time with your baby. I saw you with her in the lobby once, and I've never seen a magical moment quite like the one I saw then. You were so quiet, just staring at that little girl, a small part of you that would live on even after you died. I expected you to cry; I know I would. You were so strong.

Another quality about you I admired was your good nature. You were quick to notice a new hairstyle and your compliments were sincere. I remember how you could spend hours sitting up in your bed crocheting blankets for the baby and sweaters for your husband. With my interest in crocheting, I was eager to learn the stitches you used, and you were always happy to show me. I think you didn't enjoy crocheting as much as I thought you did then. It now occurs to me that your crafts were labors of love, designed to give warmth to your family even after you weren't around to care for them.

You knew you were dying all through those three months in the hospital, and yet you never just let yourself die. You were happy and full of love to the very end. I had to remind myself sometimes that you were dying, because you were so alive. Sometimes I wondered if I should have reminded you.

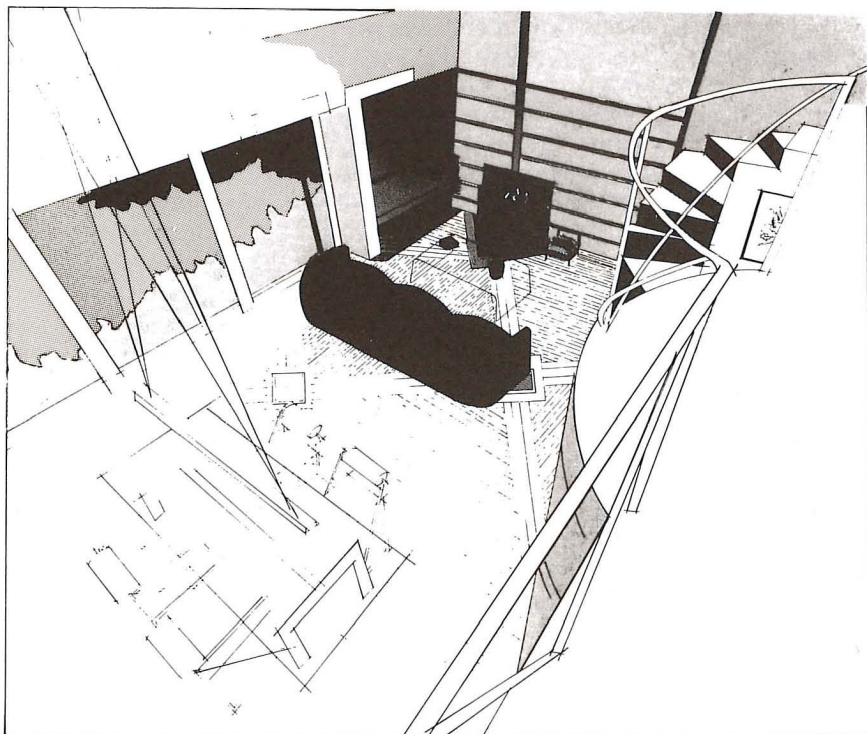
I was working the night you died. I was in room 303, right across the hall, changing a patient's water pitcher, when I saw two well-dressed men whom I recognized from the mortuary go into your room with a stretcher. Your husband came out of the room a few seconds later, and the once silent man was crying out for you, your name echoing through the hallway. I didn't hear your name though, just the pain of the lonely young widower. I'd never seen a man cry before, but then I had never known of a man who lost someone as beautiful as you.

I cried too. The nurses tried to comfort me, telling me that many patients die and that you were living in pain. How good it must be, they said, for you to finally be free of pain. I couldn't tell them what I knew about you, though. I couldn't tell them what I had learned in your eyes. The pain didn't matter, did it? All you wanted was a life with your family any way you could have it. I saw that in your eyes.

I wish I knew your name. But it really doesn't matter because I know what and who you were inside. All too often we get hung up on names, having to know everybody's before establishing any kind of relationship with them. You taught me things I may have never known about life and love. Thank you, dear stranger, for being my friend.

*You were my friend, dear stranger  
And in grief I wrote this essay,  
The tears I cried were not for then  
But for what might have been today.*





FROM THE ARTIST'S EYE  
Carolyn Klause

# BLAINE

## by Janet Wyllie

Far from the bustling metropolis of Port Huron lies a city that consists mainly of one corner. The corner is the village of Blaine, and the two main roads that intersect at this point are the roads Burtch and Wildcat. Many people stop at this intersection daily because it has a four-way stop, but they never look and see what is on these four corners.

If a person was driving west on Burtch, the first corner to the right is occupied by a small family farm. On the farm there are two barns and a rural house. The first barn is an old redwood that reminds the drivers of most all the barns he has seen before. There are old white bricks that support the wood through all types of weather. An ancient white, rotted wood fence slothfully surrounds the barn. Just on the far side of the first barn is the second small one. This barn looks like it has been standing longer than the first. It is a rustic, red building with dark, kelly green shingles covering the roof. Also, on the roof is the word Burtch printed in large block letters made of white shingles. Close to the undersized barn is a quaint country house that faces Wildcat Road. It is white with brick, and conveys a sense of family and caring.

Across Wildcat Road from the farm is the Blaine General Store. It is a small hometown store that sells essentials for area people, so they do not have to go all the way into Lakeport. The front of the mercantile looks like it has gone through a time machine and landed in the wrong century. In the driveway there are two gas pumps; one works, and the other is broken and rusted. The store has an old wooden porch with carved posts and hand rails. On the porch sets a huge metal tank filled with kerosene. Off to the side of the porch is an old lit-up Shell Gas sign with a small liquor sign hanging underneath. All across the store windows are signs mentioning local events, advertising food specials, and acceptance of food stamps. The upper level of the building is an apartment where the proprietor lives. On the side of the store facing Burtch Road hangs old farm equipment that has been collected over the years, and some old soda pop signs advertising Pepsi Cola and Hires Rootbeer. The driver of the car can almost see old men sitting on their wooden rocking chairs in front of the store talking about the old days and how good everything once was.

On the opposite side of Burtch Road from the old store is an overgrown field. The only thing that stands on this corner is a rusty billboard that has lost its struggle with Time and Mother Nature. It cries out for a good samaritan to come by and rescue it from these robbers, but one has not arrived yet.

Next, across Wildcat from the desolate corner stands a dingy gray and white house. The owner of the house has torn off part of the aluminum siding in the hopes of improving the exterior of the house. New windows and doors have been installed and the yard is being cleaned, so it looks presentable to outsiders who might stumble upon the tiny village.

If the driver was to open his window and take a deep breath, he would be overcome by the invigorating country air. The sweet smell of freshly cut hay or

grass, the scent of burning leaves, or, if he is really lucky, the fresh smell of recently manured fields are just a few of the friendly fragrances that would engulf the car. He also might hear the pleasant sound of a tractor plowing a nearby field, the laughter of children playing, or the noisy grind of a motorcycle racing through the woods.

This corner village of Blaine has special features that should not be overlooked by the visitors who pass through.

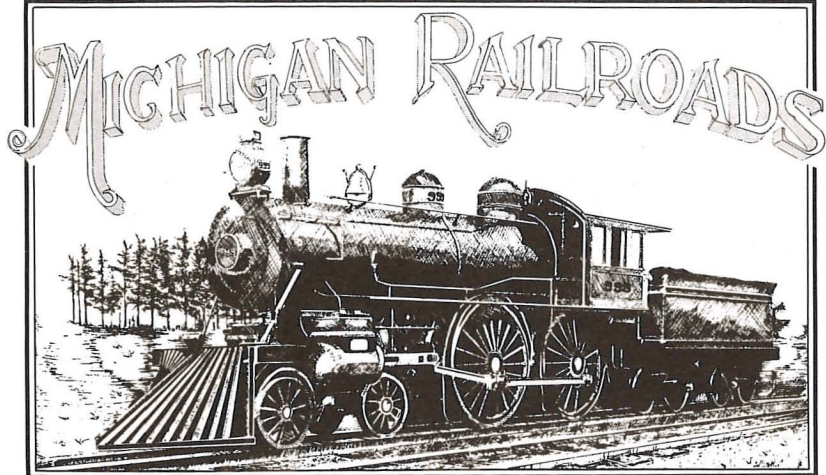
## RED

by Marlene Taylor

Red is a winter word  
Accenting stark white with  
Blazing boldness:  
A Cardinal at the feeder  
Blood-bright on snow;  
A yard-long ski cap  
White striped crimson  
Whips across a frozen pond;  
Wool mittens wet vermillion  
Freezing fingers; chapped  
Cheeks rosy circles frame  
A tiny frozen nose.  
Red mouths open to  
White breath, crystal laughter;  
Mother's coat, scarlet,  
Flashing downhill on red runners;  
Christmas crimson, red on red  
Santa Claus and candy canes;  
February morning snow  
Blown in the door with lace-edged  
Valentines, opened in a flurry  
On the icy floor; Cinnamon hearts  
In a cut-glass bowl.  
Spring softens scarlet,  
Fading down to pale pink edges.  
Red is a winter word.



HISTORIC AMERICA



MICHIGAN RAILROADS  
Gregg McCallum

# **EUDORA WELTY: A CREATIVE LITERARY ARTIST**

**by Nancy Kosek**

Phoenix Jackson beckoned me to journey with her down "A Worn Path." To my delight, I discovered Eudora Welty, a literary artist whose style is unique and imaginative. Her short story, "A Worn Path," and her related essay, "Is Phoenix Jackson's Grandson Really Dead?" enticed me to read other selections by Miss Welty. From this appreciation I began an analysis.

Eudora Welty possesses a subtle way of entering the mind, heart and body of the characters in her stories. She is sensitive to the creation she loves, whether man or woman, old or young, black or white. Phoenix Jackson, the black woman of selfless devotion in "A Worn Path," endures trials and humiliation as she confronts her mission. Her character is one of faith, hope and love, enhanced with a comic spirit and a dash of mystery.

Miss Welty received numerous letters regarding "A Worn Path." The question asked, "Is Phoenix Jackson's Grandson Really Dead?", compelled her to respond in an essay to her readers. This reply enlightened me to other factors of this author's style. Themes center around a southern setting — Mississippi, Jackson, Natchez, small meridional towns — reflect her affection for the South. Visual details enable the reader to identify and often experience a flood of memories. With such clues as a figure, a landscape, an image, or dreams, Miss Welty has invented characters and settings from her own true-to-life experience. She describes Phoenix Jackson as "her skin had a pattern all its own of numberless branching wrinkles and as though a whole little tree stood in the middle of her forehead, but golden color ran underneath, and the two knobs of her cheeks were illumined by a yellow burning under the dark." This colorful image was provided by a solitary old woman she had encountered; thus the origin of her story was created.

Eudora Welty's style of writing combines affection with humor and reality with fantasy to develop a character who experiences dreams, frights, harassments, shame and joy, forming Phoenix Jackson, a person full of life. She writes with moral consciousness of her vision of life. In "A Worn Path" Phoenix experiences no racial issues or confrontation. She does, however, personify charity, a virtue totally missing from the white people she encounters.

In "A Worn Path" I noticed an abundance of similes and metaphors: limber as a buggy whip, light as feathers, silent as a ghost, like a puff of milkweed. Most authors would not dream of overusing petrified sayings but Miss Welty has the unique ability of depicting an effective descriptive composition.

Readers of fiction often insist on entertainment; however, I like to read philosophically and more for the description. Miss Welty writes with symbolic significance, using names and ideas to represent a metaphorical impression. With the name Phoenix, I visualize the mythical bird, rising from its ashes, again and again, completing a dramatic rebirth. Phoenix Jackson continued again and

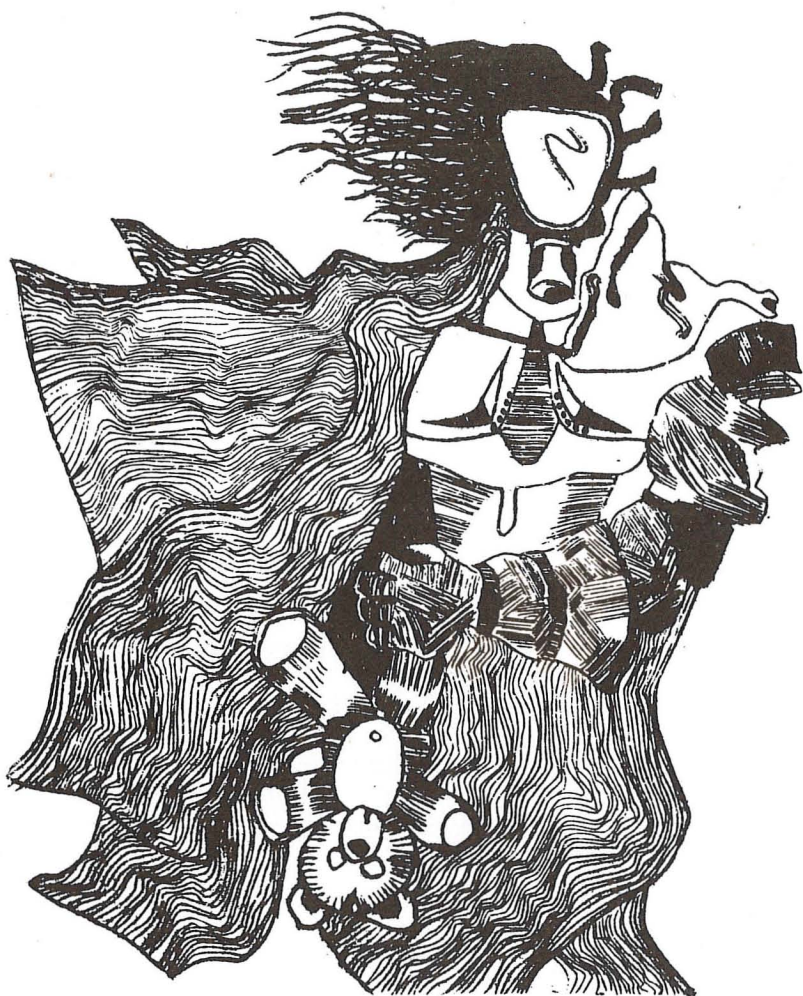
again on "A Worn Path" experiencing hardships and triumphs in human relationships, completing her ultimate victory. Grandma Phoenix planning to purchase a paper windmill for her grandson who swallowed lye signifies an irony that I am still contemplating. The title "A Worn Path" is a human endurance, an arduous journey, a humiliating path of life to victory.

Old Phoenix is signaling me once again to join her. This time she wants to introduce me to characters like Edna Earle, Uncle Daniel, the Peacock family — all products of Eudora Welty's love for writing. Won't you join us? I guarantee that you will be delighted.

## **FENCES** **(seen from car windows)** **by Marlene Taylor**

They march past  
In quick succession,  
Measuring ownership  
And unseen boundaries.  
Each stretch different  
As its builder,  
Age evident in construction.  
Weathered rails,  
Worn smooth by bovine scratching,  
Sprawl at crazy angles,  
Lumped lazily in corners;  
Fresh painted planks  
Stand proudly on their margins.  
State land fencing—  
Rigid rows, forbidding;  
"No Trespass"  
Written sharply  
In barbed wire.  
Fences marking time  
As well as place,  
Imprisoning rusty tractors  
And complacent cows.  
Testament to man's tendency  
To hold things in,  
and out.





LONELY EXISTENCE  
Robert Shapton

# EMILY'S SONG

Second Place Tie

by Nancy Wells

It couldn't have been a lovelier day. The cool, crisp November air was playing havoc with the colorful leaves, blowing them freely about on my front lawn. I remember thinking I should attempt to rake them since that task always seemed to relax me. My children, however, had different plans for that particular fall day. They were quick to remind me of a promise I had made earlier that week. We were to see the film Heidi's Song, which was playing at the Huron Theatre. Being a parent who tries to teach children the value of keeping promises, I knew the day was out of my control. I would have preferred to lose myself in thought, mind wandering aimlessly, rake in hand. Certainly, the relaxation would have been beneficial after nine months of anticipation and concern over the impending event of blessed motherhood. The birth of my daughter, Emily, was a day I will never forget.

At one o'clock p.m. my five year-old son, ten year-old daughter, and I were in line waiting to buy our tickets for the animated feature of their dreams. The thought of those stiff, narrow chairs on my wide, aching body almost made me forget about parental commitments. I waddled up to the booth, purchased the tickets, gathered my children and proceeded into the theatre. The children wanted to sit in the front row, but with gentle persuasion, we compromised on several rows back. The curtain opened, the show began, and I pushed my chair back deciding to settle for a short nap.

About twenty minutes into the film my contractions began. I wanted to pretend that they were just my imagination, but painful reality soon intervened. I whispered to my son that I thought it was time for his new baby brother or sister to come into the world. He responded by yelling at the top of his lungs, "Mom, are you gonna have the baby right now?" All eyes were now on me and not on Heidi's Song. "Son," I said. "keep your voice down!" Louder than the time before he replied, "My mom's gonna have a baby right here in the show!" People now began to stare, snicker and talk among themselves. My contractions deepened in severity. I told the children we would have to leave shortly. My son's voice reached a deafening pitch, "Mom, tell the baby to wait! I want to see the ending!"

Endlessly, painfully, I made my way to the pay phone, leaving the children to enjoy what time they had left with the film. My husband answered the phone after what seemed like an eternity. "Honey, it's time. Get to the Huron Theatre, QUICK," I said in my panic stricken voice. "O.K., I'll grab Ma and be right there," he replied. My mom, who was visiting from Florida, was standing by waiting once again to become a grandma. I hung up the phone and returned to my children. Daniel, my son, had to be dragged out of the row and up the aisle. Daughter Carrie pretended not to know either one of us.

Outside the theatre things kicked into high gear. My contractions were coming every minute; I was doubled up with pain. Strangers were volunteering transportation to the hospital. A police car, cruising the area, stopped to ask if I

needed assistance. I became the center of a small group of gawkers. Just when I thought my husband had forgotten me, I saw the familiar blue Oldsmobile. Thirty minutes had passed from phone call to arrival. "What took you so long?" I asked. "Honey, I had to shave and comb my hair, ya know" was his reply.

After uttering expletives that most army sergeants shun, I decided this was not the best time for a full scale war. I crawled into the car and off we headed toward Port Huron Hospital. Meanwhile, Mother was shaking her head, declaring I had not learned any of those awful words from her. Driving up to the emergency room entrance, my husband and I were met by an orderly with a wheelchair. Mom took over the steering wheel and drove the children home to wait. I went to obstetrics while my husband filled out paperwork.

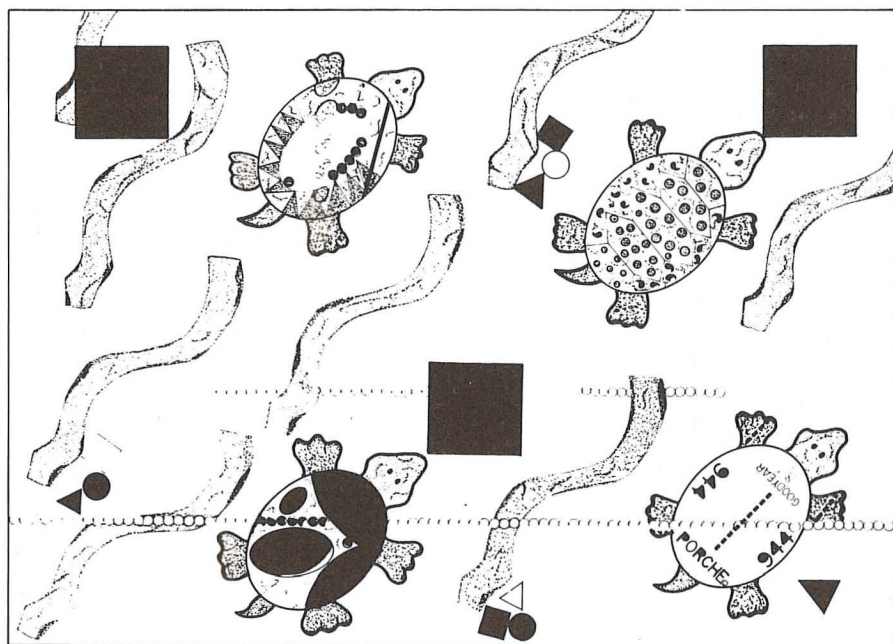
I waited for my husband to join me as I changed into my hospital gown. I secretly wondered who would make it to my room first, my husband or the physician, now being paged. Contractions increased in length and intensity. The nurse checked my progress internally. "It's crowning!" she called to another nurse. Hurriedly, others prepared a delivery room. While being shackled and placed in stirrups, I saw Dr. Sharpe arrive. He had beaten my dear husband, Robert, after all. "Have you seen my husband?" I asked. Not waiting for his reply, I said, "We've had the classes. Where is he?"

"I believe I saw him struggling with his whites in the changing room," he replied. A nurse was sent to locate him. Entering the room, my husband stared at me intently. "What took you so long?" I asked. "I had to wash up, ya know, Honey," he replied. This time there were no expletives, just a very loud grunt followed by the shrill cry of a newborn baby. What a heavenly sound!

Yes, in just over an hour, a new life entered this world. Our daughter, Emily Anne, came into being, changing our lives forever. Upon her arrival, her father was neatly dressed, clean shaven and completely sanitized from head to toe. Mother was never shaved, never prepped, never bathed and totally disheveled.

Following recovery, I was wheeled by stretcher into my postpartum room. I was looking forward to some peace and quiet when the phone rang. "It's the kids," my husband said, picking up the receiver. Placing the phone to my ear, I heard my son say, "Mom, when you get out of the hospital you have to take us to see Heidi's Song. We missed the ending!"





**TURTLE RACE**  
 Dani Artman

# SCOTCH SHORTBREAD

Second Place Honors

by Barbara Cotter

It felt funny rummaging through Grandma's things: china cabinet to cousin Josh, jewelry to Aunt Grace, and boxes marked for the Goodwill. Grandma would have had a fit to see the collection of a lifetime, going this way and that. Grandma was close with things.

She broke her hip on her eightieth birthday. It was wintertime, and she slipped on the front porch steps. Uncle Jack cursed himself for not insisting that he help her down the steps, but it wasn't his fault. Grandma was too proud to admit weakness. I went to the hospital to see her about a week after it happened. I waited in the hall until Aunt Bette came out of Grandma's room to talk to me.

"Elizabeth, do you want to see Grandma?" she asked.

"Sure," I said casually. I began to move toward the room, but Aunt Bette stopped me. I stared at her confused.

"She's dying."

I felt a rush of fear and confusion at these words. The next day Grandma died.

At Grandma's house I was assigned to wrapping and packing whatnots. They were arranged on a bookcase that stood just four feet high. My hands worked methodically, until I touched something familiar. I knelt down for a closer look. It was a tree trunk with one, long branch. A little girl sat on a swing hanging from the branch. As my finger moved the swing back and forth I felt a smile. Grandma would yell if she saw me.

"Get away from there now! Those things are just to look at. You're going to break something."

I'd move away and pout and sneak back first chance I got. It was such a fascination. Sometimes she'd see me and not say anything, but I knew it bothered her. One day, she put the tree with the girl on the swing in front of me on the floor and invited me to play with it. I was delighted! I lay down next to it and happily swung it back and forth for nearly an hour. When I was done, she put it back on the shelf and said, "There. You oughta have had your fill of that now." She didn't mean it cruel, but it felt cruel. I was only five years old then, and I didn't understand yet: Grandma was real close with things.

The bookcase still looked the same, dusty. It felt good being on my knees looking up. The bookcase was tall, like it was then, when the house was full of sweet smells, hearty laughter, and Grandma's booming voice. She was a good woman, mostly.

"Do you want that?" My mom's voice cut into my thoughts. My eyes looked to the object near my hand.

"Sure!" I reacted.

"I thought you might. You've been playing with it for nearly ten minutes. Back to work!" She boomed, and walked away laughing.

I continued packing and tried to pick up remembering where I'd left off, but now the scene three weeks ago at the hospital was upon me. I was standing by Grandma's bed, and she kept beckoning me, closer and closer, until my face was nearly against hers.

"Would you be a dear and take off my stockings?" she said. I looked down at her bare legs and didn't answer.

"Nurse, please take off my stockings!" she said harshly. I felt wounded.

"Grandma, it's me, Beth. It's Elizabeth, Grandma."

"Beth darling, my legs feel so warm. Will you please uncover them? Why won't the damned nurse take off my stockings!"

"Just do what she asks," Aunt Bette instructed. So I moved to the end of the bed and removed her stockings over and over again, while Grandma cursed at me for refusing to take them off. I was repulsed. She was too thin and utterly pale, ugly.

When the packing was almost done, Aunt Bette said she'd stay and finish alone, so Mom and I could make the long drive home. I left rich with treasure. I got the fancy-dressed doll Grandma always kept on her bed, a homemade stool Grandpa had made when he was alive, and the tree with the girl on the swing. I felt like a thief. I concealed from Mom and Aunt Bette that I thought Grandma wouldn't have wanted me to have any of her precious things. I cried at the funeral, everyone cried, but it wasn't real for me. It was just a release of tension. Of course I loved her, except...

As we drove the long, quiet way home from Grandma's house, bits and pieces of something I didn't want to remember came back to me. It was a memory of a time six years before, when I was thirteen. Momma got very sick that year, so I went to live with Grandma for a while. We became real close in the months we were together. We took walks and played pinochle. At night we lay in my bed and read to each other. We teased and laughed, and argued a little, and loved each other. We learned to forgive each other's funny ways until one day when I did something, and she did something, and it was never undone.

It was all about Scotch shortbread. Grandma made it every Christmas time; she was famous for it. Every Christmas Eve, when the family was gathered together, she'd give everyone a gift-wrapped box of it and tell the story of its origin, while we gobbled it down:

"When I was a young woman, oh, about nineteen, long before your Grandpa came along, I lived in a boarding house run by an old Scotch woman. Well, we became real good friends. I lived there near two years. And she trusted me more than anybody. She had no children of her own, you see." Often at this point she'd get side-tracked with tales of the blessing or the curse it was to have children. We all listened dutifully. "Well, at Christmas time this woman, Lucy was her name, made the most delicious Scotch shortbread. It was a family recipe, had been handed down for generations. After I left the boarding house and had a family of my own, I'd go back there every holiday to visit Lucy and get a bit of her wonderful shortbread. One year, to my great surprise, she called me into the kitchen and showed me how to make it! And I not even Scotch! She said I was her most loyal and trusted friend, like a daughter. She was sure not gonna



live forever, and she didn't want the recipe to be forgotten. She died the very next year, and I've made shortbread every year since, faithful." And faithfully Grandma kept the recipe secret. I loved the story, and I loved the shortbread.

The Christmas I lived with Grandma, I was determined to learn the recipe. I loved to bake, and I was very good at it. No one else would keep up the tradition like I would, so, I reasoned, it should be passed on to me. I knew it wouldn't be easy to get. I started around Thanksgiving, so I'd have plenty of time to convince Grandma.

"Grandma, I love you more than anything," I flattered. "If I learn to make it just right," I promised. "Please, please, I have to have it," I begged, all to no avail.

"Darling, you know I favor you," she'd say and squeeze my hand. "But I just can't go giving out the recipe willy-nilly." She'd give me a talk about responsibility and stuff like that. I'd sulk, she'd tease me, and we'd both laugh. A week or so later I'd ask again. It became kind of a game. Neither of us saw how seriously we both were playing.

Five days before Christmas, the baking began. I helped the first two days with cakes and sugar cookies. The third day I was exiled from the kitchen. As I walked past the door, I could see her figure working at the counter. If I lingered too long, she'd shake a finger at me. We'd both laugh, and I would reluctantly move away.

On the morning of the fourth day, I lay in bed, contemplating fretful possibilities. At seventy-four, Grandma was active and healthy, but who knows! She could kick off anytime with the recipe lost forever. I meandered down to the kitchen. Grandma wasn't up yet. Her recipe file was on the counter, open. I wondered if she kept the precious shortbread recipe there. I meant to take just a peek, but I found the card and pulled it out. Three ingredients were printed on the card, with no measurements.

I felt a hand snatch the card from me and looked up at Grandma astonished. "You really surprise me, Elizabeth. You of all people! I never thought you'd try to steal my recipe."

"I just wondered..."

"You just wondered if you could dupe an old woman. Ha! I'm not so stupid. You know nothing about respect, loyalty, trust... I trusted you!"

"Trusted me!" Pent up aggravation poured out of me now. "You don't trust me with anything. You're afraid to let me touch your precious things. You make me leave the room while you hide your money. You double-check everything I do, because I just never do things quite right. You don't trust me to flush the toilet, and you don't trust me with your damned recipe!"

I felt a sting across my cheek, and tears came to my eyes. I heard her voice loud against me. "Profanity! You've shown yourself today. To swear at your Grandmother..." Her voice broke off as I retreated to the doorway. I addressed her levelly.

"When I was eight years old, I was playing in the corner china cabinet. I leaned on a shelf, and it fell down on top of me. Do you remember?"

She didn't respond, so I continued. "You were there so fast to lift it off me that I didn't even have time to be afraid. It felt so good, Grandma. Then you began picking up the dishes frantically, all the time crying and repeating, 'I hope there's nothing broken!' Why didn't you wonder if I was broken, Grandma?"

"That's silly. I could see you weren't hurt. You weren't even crying."

"But I did cry, Grandma, later. After you saw the broken pieces of Grandpa's vase and looked at me like I... With that terrible look. I went to my room, and I cried."

"It was the vase your Grandfather gave me on our wedding night. It was on the dresser with a dozen roses..." I felt her lapsing into an old story. I turned away, and she stopped speaking.

In one last burst of anger I faced her with my fist clenched and held against my chest. "Keep the recipe real close, Grandma," I said coldly.

I looked up from memories I couldn't quite understand to familiar surroundings near home. Six years of polite conversation and silence had passed between Grandma and me. Six Christmases with the aftertaste of shortbread always between us. Well, she was dead now, and the recipe died with her. Mom broke my thoughts with a "home at last" as we pulled into the driveway.

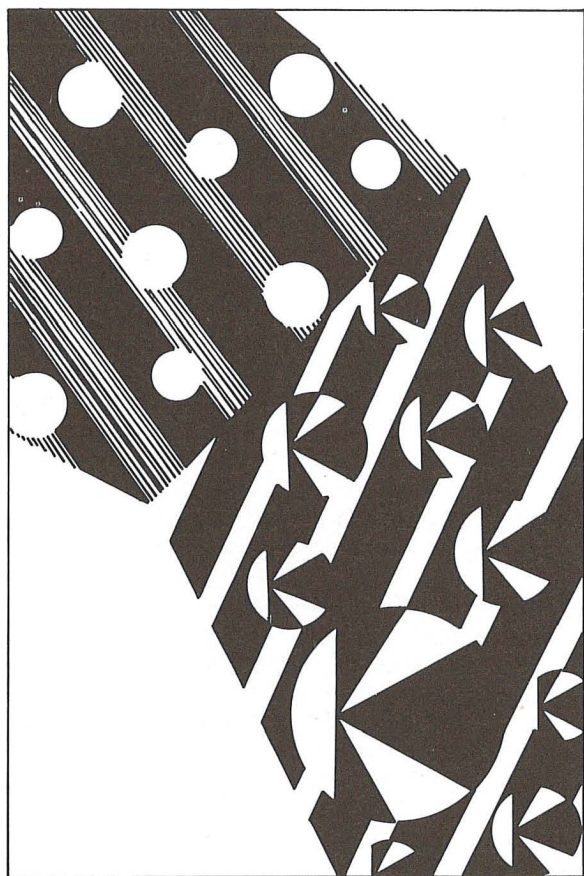
Later that evening Aunt Bette called. "I found a letter under Grandma's dresser cloth with your name on it," she said. "It reads, 'To Elizabeth June only.' With the only underlined twice. Do you want me to mail it to you?"

"No. I'll drive down and get it tomorrow." The urgency of my response startled me. It was a two-hour drive to Grandma's house. It would be silly to waste the gas and time. Still I insisted, and my puzzled aunt finally agreed.

I drove to Grandma's the next day and drove back home with the unopened letter sitting next to me on the seat. "What was it?" Mom asked as I walked through the door.

"I don't know," I answered and hurried to my room. I stared at the envelope for a few minutes, and when I opened it my fears were realized. Inside were two 3x5 cards with careful instructions hand printed on them. On the top of the first was printed "Scotch Shortbread" and a date, Christmas Eve, six years past. The anger was undone, and I sobbed with my guilt and love. Why hadn't she told me? I shook my head in confusion. So Grandma was close with people, too. I felt her then near me and part of me. I the inheritor of all of this. I cried some more and laughed and cried.

Christmas was just a month away.



**DESERT REFUSE**  
Debbie Kielbasa



## (on "To an Athlete...")

Second Place Winner

by Carol Smolinski

Upon considering A.E. Housman's "To an Athlete Dying Young," we find the poet paralleling the young athlete's victory parade with his funeral procession. The sudden shift from a joyous event to a tragic one has a dramatic effect because of the similarities between the two. Housman suggests that it is preferable to die when a person is at the height of his glory or in the midst of productivity instead of sputtering out like a spent wick.

The first stanza has the cheering crowd carrying the victorious athlete home on shoulders of acclaim after he captures the race for his town. The second stanza has him being carried home shoulder high again, as in the first stanza, but in a casket to his final resting place. This stanza comes as somewhat of a surprise after the triumphant first one, but there its impact lies, as well as in its strong parallel. In the first line, second stanza, "Today, the road all runners come," Housman illustrates the certain fate common to all of us, death. The casket is set "at your threshold down, townsman of a stiller town". The casket is then set at the threshold of the grave. The threshold symbolizes the passageway between life and death as well as the threshold of the grave itself.

The tone shifts slightly in the third stanza as the author applauds the athlete's departure from the world of the living where glory and fame are so transient. He says, "Smart lad, to slip betimes away." The laurel leaves were once used to crown victorious Greek athletes and are a symbol of honor. Their use first appears in this stanza, "and early though the laurel grows, it withers quicker than the rose." This illustrates that honor may be bestowed early in life, but it can fade suddenly. The rose is a suitable symbol here because at its peak there are few things as splendid or lush, but it is fragile and swift to pass from us.

As we continue, Housman draws attention to other aspects of death he considers preferable to aging. Eyes that have been closed by death, "the shady night," could not witness the old records being broken or other achievements surpassed by those younger and stronger. To the ears numbed by death the absence of accolades would not be disheartening.

The fifth stanza implies that had the athlete had the opportunity to weaken and age he may have taken pleasure in the defeat of others, "swelled the rout," whom fame had fled as it once did him. He continues that thought with the line, "and the name died before the man," and tells of men whose names and achievements are forgotten before they die.

Now the author urges the young athlete to "set, before its echoes fade, the fleet foot, on the sill of shade," suggesting that he should step into the world of darkness, or death, before the memories of his victories fade from the minds of his admirers, and take with him his title, "the still defended challenge-cup." By doing this, no one will have the opportunity to defeat him.

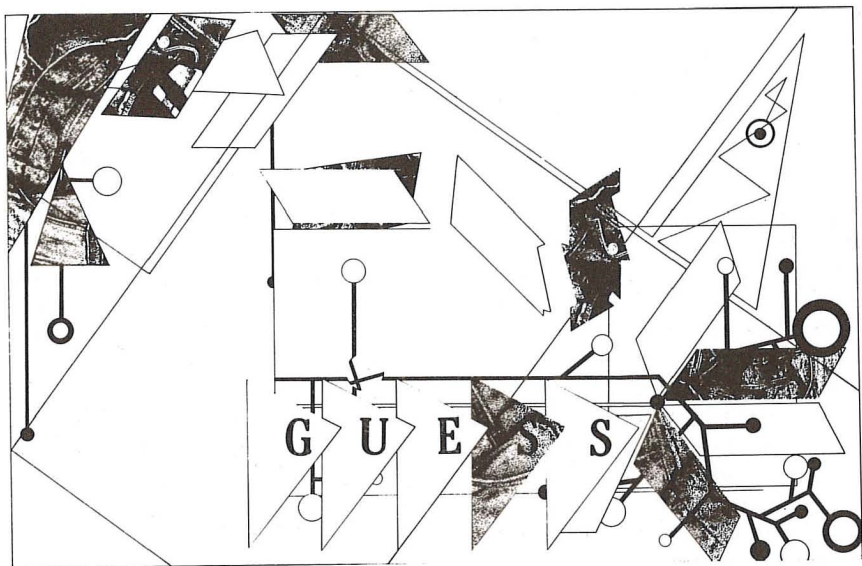
The final stanza gives us the laurel again as a symbol of honor but also as representative of the young athlete's successful life, "and find unwithered on its

curls, the garland, briefer than a girl's." The briefness or smallness of a girl's garland implies the short life the athlete spent in glory, yet the freshness of the laurel implies the freshness of victory and the immortalizing of his memory. He will always be remembered as he was when he died: young, vibrant and triumphant.

The image behind the last stanza is a popular one and we recognize it today in the lives of famous artists, athletes or politicians such as John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The film star Marilyn Monroe comes to mind through this poem. Had she lived to grow old, she may have just flickered and dwindled to guest spots on "Love Boat" episodes wearing kind, concealing chiffon. Dying at the peak of her beauty and turbulent success preserved her image, and she remains an enigma for millions of admirers. This theme is also echoed in a line from Neil Young's song "My My, Hey Hey," where he proclaims, "It's better to burn out than it is to rust," meaning he would rather live fast and furiously and perhaps destroy himself, than decay from a long life of boredom and moderation.

Housman seems to be somewhat older, not just in age, but in attitude. There is a matter-of-factness about death that smacks slightly of cynicism. Perhaps the author is bitter because of some personal fading glory and uses his experience to counsel the athlete.

The use of common language, rhyming couplets and iambic tetrameter all lend themselves to the poem's conversational tone and its didactic impact. Housman's use of an athlete holds special significance because of the status and admiration athletes enjoy, particularly in our country. The glory and luster of victory is profound and intoxicating, yet inevitably fleeting. How many people can remember who won the Superbowl two years ago? However, the immortality guaranteed by mourning admirers, remembering the best and yearning for more, is the consolation to an athlete dying young.



**GUESS**  
Danny Hayes



# CONCERT FEVER

by Sheila Moore

The auditorium was filled to its capacity. The music being pumped from speakers placed all around the Joe Louis Arena began to create a fever and sense of anticipation in the crowd. Suddenly the lights flashed, then dimmed out, leaving the entire auditorium in total darkness. The fans started to cheer, clap their hands, pound their feet, and wave their arms in a wild frenzy. At the same instant flashes of light reappeared on center stage in quick bursts of fluorescent white, purple, red, green, and blue, coming and going in all directions. The band on stage opened with the beat from "Rumours," while at the same moment the announcer introduced the group, "The Timex Social Club." One by one members of the group ran out on stage and took their places in front of the microphones. Instantly the crowd picked up the beat, "Timex Social Club" started to sing, and the 1986 "My Adidas Concert Tour" began, all in the same moment.

As the group on stage continued to sing, the audience seemed to let go and lose all sense of control. Standing on the main floor of the auditorium I felt many emotions: confusion, excitement, and fascination. I began jumping, screaming, and waving my arms with all the enthusiasm of the other fans standing around me. Just as the crowd was beginning to reach the peak of their excitement, "Whodini" came out on stage in accompaniment to their latest hit song, "Funky Beat." The crowd broke out with a tremendous amount of screaming and applause. This, in turn, brought on a high degree of pushing and shoving in order to get closer to the stage.

Caught up in the pushing and shoving, I had to fight to keep my feet in place in order not to be knocked to the ground or pushed back further into the back of the crowd. While all of this was happening, a fight broke out in front of the stage. Security guards out of nowhere pushed their way towards the fight; once they reached the fight, the guards picked up the trouble-maker and carried her out of the crowd. Following the security's lead the crowd pushed harder and harder in order to get closer to the stage. Trapped in all of the confusion I began to fight back. When pushed from behind, I pushed towards the front. When hit from the side, I immediately kicked back. I was gaining more ground and getting closer and closer to the front. I had lost all sense of reality, time, and thought. All that mattered was to get a place right in front of that stage. In an attempt to reach my destination at a much quicker pace, I stationed myself behind a much larger individual who appeared to have the same goal. Whenever he moved, I moved, and before I knew it: there I was, right up front, on the floor, in front of the stage. During all of the confusion I had missed the performance of the "Beastie Boys" and "L.L. Cool J.," and I had also lost my older sister Angie somewhere in the crowd. There wasn't enough time to think about any of this as "Run D.M.C." came out on stage and began their performance with "Walk This Way," a popular song. All in a frenzy, the crowd jumped up and down, pushed back and forth, screamed and cheered with all its might in order to be seen, noticed, and

heard. I was being crushed from all directions, and the only way I could breathe was to jump up and take quick breaths in between jumps.

By the time "Run D.M.C." had started to sing "My Adidas," I could barely move, breathe, or stand. Slowly I began to push my way back. The concert was almost over and I had seen all I wanted to see. As I moved back through the crowd I searched all the unfamiliar faces for some sign of my sister, Angie, but I didn't have any luck in finding her. I did find the restroom though. I couldn't believe what I saw when I looked in the mirror. There were footprints on my white tennis shoes, my hair was in general disarray, and all my clothes were soaked with perspiration. It had been quite a night. When I came out of the restroom, the concert was just ending. I stationed myself near the main exit so I would be sure to see my sister as she came out. Angie walked out about ten minutes later with footprints on her white tennis shoes, her hair a mess, and her clothes soaking wet. She also had quite a night.

## **A CHANGE**

**by Jennifer Guyor**

Its gentleness caresses me  
The world traveller of all seasons  
A rustler of leaves; God's breath  
Collected to fill a billowing sail.

Now the rampaging widower  
The winter snow sculptress arrives  
To storm-tossed seas; God's fury  
Shredding the once proud sails.



TRAPPERS ALLEY  
Carol Mahaffy



## **TIME**

### **by Debbie Nichols**

It keeps on going,  
even as I call.  
It doesn't hear me,  
No response at all.  
If I could catch it,  
or even slow it down;  
to make it go back  
another way around.  
But it won't stop,  
not even when I cry.  
Give me one more chance, I say,  
for if I could, I'd buy.  
But time won't sell to any man,  
nor waiting does it know,  
until He declares the end  
Then time will be no more.

*Inspired by Microbiology lecture.*

## **MONEY — NEW AND OLD**

### **by Marlene Taylor**

Nouveau Riche—  
A flashy flock,  
Preening gaudy plumage  
In all the  
Proper Places.  
Migrating mechanically  
From Sushi bar  
To health club,  
In public display  
Of private ritual,  
Proud.

Old Money  
Sniffs at surface culture,  
Theirs inbred.  
Preferring lower profile,  
Woody hues,  
They are hidden in endless acreage,  
Earth, and ancestry.  
Exclusive, set apart,  
secure.



VICTORIAN SEASIDE RESIDENCES  
Lee Ann Cuppen

# I REMEMBER JOE

## by Brian Kelly

"So who was he? What did he do, and why should we care?" you could ask. I could answer the first two easily, but the last question is one that I've wrestled with myself for the past twelve hours. Joe was a friend, a soldier, a man.

We met a few years ago overseas. We were in the same infantry outfit and we became pretty good friends. Twelve hours ago I found out from the morning mail that he's dead. Right now I'm looking out my dirty back door window at a vacant lot, and I'm trying to get a grip on what he was, and more importantly, what he was to me. I take a nasty gulp of a lukewarm Stroh's and say to myself, "Yeah, I remember Joe."

I remember us sitting in a four-lane bowling alley on the post where we were stationed in West Germany. That was our usual hangout. We'd watch the bowlers, drink a couple of beers, and talk. He'd tell me about his kids, his ex-wife, and Vietnam. Always Vietnam.

I thought about what he looked like back then. He was 34, but he sure looked older. Vietnam had given him a few war wounds and had definitely ragged out his appearance. He had a nice-sized scar on his left cheek, but it wasn't completely hideous, you know, like Frankenstein would wear. He was small and muscular, and losing his hair. He would joke about that. He would say after every haircut he got that he was "paying for nothing."

He first enlisted when he was seventeen. He came home on leave before going over to Vietnam and married his high school sweetheart. They didn't live happily ever after. He came back from the war with a couple of ribbons and a couple of Purple Hearts. The things he kept the longest, he would tell me, were the bad dreams. They lasted longer than his marriage.

He had just gotten back from "Nam," and after a short Army shuffle through a base in Hawaii, his wife picked him up at the airport in San Francisco. "It was the happiest day of my life," he told me "until I stepped outside the terminal." A crowd of long-haired students protesting the war spotted Joe in his dress greens and decided to make a scene. One called him a "baby killer" and spit at him. Joe stepped forward and silenced the hippie with a quick right that split the guy's forehead open. Joe told me he wanted to bash the guy's face in more thoroughly but the screaming and begging of his angry wife made him stop. Welcome home, huh?

Needless to say, their marriage drudged through eleven years before his wife called it quits and took the kids. Joe was the manager of a successful finance company in California then, and the divorce disintegrated his world. He quit his job and joined back up with the Army.

So here he was, at age thirty-four, telling me about it. We would do a lot of drinking, and we'd do a lot of talking in that small bowling alley. He did most of the talking, I guess, but I didn't mind. I never was one much for that. Besides, he had some damn good stories.



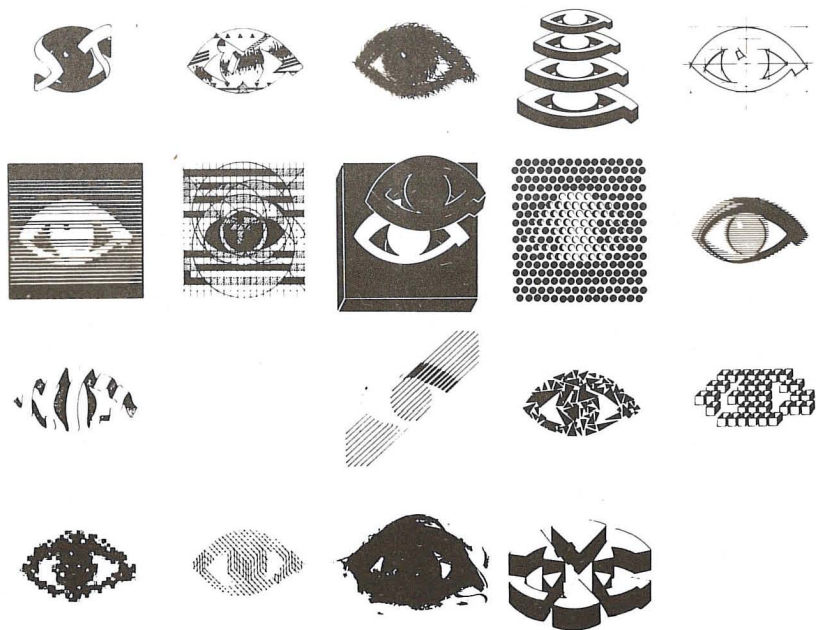
He told me once about a time when he was on a patrol that discovered a small Viet Cong supply trail. As he and his buddies crouched in the rotting vegetation wondering what to do, three VC came out from the undergrowth onto the trail. They were pushing and balancing a bicycle loaded with a couple of crated supplies. They waited for the VC to come closer; then they popped them off one, two, three. Joe crawled over to the one he shot to make sure he was dead. He rolled the body over, and it was a twelve year old girl.

How could anyone forget, ever, something like that? But Joe had seen worse things. Things that made him wake up screaming. Things his wife couldn't understand. I wondered what those things were.

If he could blame all his troubles on something, it would be the war. But he didn't blame it on that. Joe didn't blame it on anything. The war was a catalytic event in his life that changed everything, but his life had been centered on his family, and the destruction of that left his life unfocused. He knew it, but I don't think he could accept it.

I thought about the last time I saw him. It was in a crowded German bar full of noisy, drunken Germans and loud music. Joe was really depressed. He had gotten a letter from his ex-wife's lawyer. It was all beginning to sink in on how rotten his life had become. He wanted someone to talk to and I didn't feel like listening. He didn't know what to do, and I didn't know what to tell him. Joe broke down and wept in the loud, smoky bar. You know, I really couldn't feel sorry for him. I felt disgusted and left.

He was transferred stateside the following week. That was the last I heard of him, until now. I picked up the letter and read it again, then stepped outside and sat down. I looked up at the sky, but the stars weren't there. It was dark. I crumpled up the letter, and I cried. Yeah, I remember Joe.



# BLAME IT ON TRENTON

by Brian Kelly

It had been eight years since Rasputin Fenswerth walked out of the Manford Iron Works for the last time. Eight long years since he last drove that lonely stretch of highway home. Eight years of despair, gloom, and uncertainty since he pulled his rusty Ford truck off to the side of that great ribbon of concrete and, eating the half of a banana he had in his lunchbox, made the decision that would change his way of life forever. A decision he made eight years ago as he looked in his rearview mirror at the factory lights shining behind him in the dark. It seemed like only yesterday.

It was the decision to leave the glamorous life of a factory worker and enter the humdrum world of a secret espionage agent. Eight years since he had licked the banana pulp off his greasy, iron-blackened fingers and decided to never go back.

The transition from factory worker to super-spy-mercenary-for-hire was not easy. Often in the middle of the night he would wake up with the urge to adjust the thermostat heating element on the temperature control unit of an arc welder. It would be years before he could walk past a nut, bolt, or screw without making sure it was tightly fastened. Eight long years.

The training for super-spy-mercenary-for-hire (henceforth abbreviated S.S.M.F.H.) was long and vigorous. As Rasputin became more immersed in his training, he would often pace the floor nervously, waiting for the next correspondence course to arrive in the mail from Trenton. He studied arduously, with few exceptions, supplementing the learning process with warm Stroh's beer and stale Dorito-brand corn chips. Lesson #5C was especially difficult, and it took Rasputin weeks to be proficient at "Political Assassination with a Pencil." A docile man by nature, Rasputin learned the violent ways of an S.S.M.F.H. slowly. Only after establishing a mental picture of a scab worker crossing a union picket line was he able to master the lesson on "Incapacitating a Helpless and Unarmed Opponent," for example.

After his completion of numerous through-the-mail courses and the subsequent emptying of his life savings from the Manfor Savings and Loan, Rasputin completed his training and received his diploma from that mail-order house of higher education in New Jersey. It was a day of happiness and joy equalled only by his previous accomplishment of completing the sixth grade at the age of twenty-three. Rasputin reflected on the last time he had felt so good about himself, that blustery day back in 1977 when the pregnancy tests of a girlfriend he had then came back negative. She was very ugly.

Part of being a spy, Rasputin knew, was the selection of a personal code name by which to become known/respected/feared/ and with which to operate. Giving it serious thought, he adopted as his secret professional name an abbreviation of Rasputin, Raz (as in Ma-Taz, and all that jazz). His previous choice had been Rootin' Tootin' Commie Shootin' Rasputin from Langootin. But, being from Manford, a small factory town in Minnesota, and not from Langootin, a tiny fishing village in Northern Alaska, he thought it best to drop that selection from consideration.



Raz waited and waited for an assignment to come, anything. A bloody coup in a Central African nation, the theft of some industrial secrets from a large corporation, or even returning some soda pop bottles to the supermarket, whatever, Rasputin was ready for the challenge.

Finally, Raz got an urgent call from the Michigan Employment Security Commission. A job at last. The mission: exterminate one of the country's most foremost and nefarious villains, the evil Dr. Fuzzpudsukker. Dr. Fuzzpudsukker was the man whose twisted mind was responsible for numerous deviations in American society: the Edsel, Tuna McNuggets, Groundhog Day, and the abolition of happy hour at Freddie's Pink Fandango Bar and Grill. Raz especially hated him for that one. Exterminate, MESC's polite term for "meider da bum." Raz accepted the mission.

After a painstaking, month-long search, Raz luckily stumbled onto the doctor's whereabouts in Dusty City, Arizona, while he was trying to pick up a hooker. The phone call to his motel room, "Come and get me, Scuzzbag, I'm at the old Milton Brothers' warehouse," didn't exactly hurt, either.

The Milton Brothers' warehouse. It was on the side of town so rough that there wasn't even a White Castle there. Raz regretted not having his special spy handgun with him, the Walter PPK Special. He had loaned it to his brother, who wanted to set up some bottles and cans behind his house and shoot at them. Raz went unarmed.

As Raz pulled his rusty Ford into the parking lot of the warehouse, he was angered to see that the doctor's get-away car was a foreign import. "I'll get that commie!" he muttered to himself.

He crept in quietly through a side door, looking for something to use as a weapon against the doctor. Suddenly he saw a Clempten Model 12 Arc Welder on the other side of the room and decided that he could use it to weld the doctor's lips together and thus starve the fiend to death. Raz had been trained on the Model 14, a far more superior welding machine, but he supposed that the Model 12 would have to do.

As he made his way toward the piece of equipment, a bright light shone down on him from above. It was the doctor; it was a trap. "Sol!" the doctor yelled down to him, "Thinking of welding my lips together, eh?" "Darn!" thought Raz.

Raz was not prepared for what happened next. If only he would have read the lesson on "Falling Weights" that night back in July instead of watching wrestling on TV and neglecting his training. The doctor released a two-ton iron weight that landed smack-dab on Raz's noggin, mashing it like a pumpkin under a wagon wheel.

Inspecting his evil handiwork, the doctor chuckled, "Hmmm, that's the most interesting cephalic index I've ever seen!"

"What?" screamed Robert Del, publisher and owner of Del-Bob Paperback Books. "I can't believe you killed off Rasputin Fenswerth. He was our most successful character! He was loved by millions! An American institution!" He grunted hard and swallowed. "He made us rich."

"Relax, Bobbie, relax," Milton Craig, author of over two hundred and twenty "Raz" paperbacks motioned. "Spy books are out, out, out. Romance is the way to big bucks these days."

"Well," Robert Dell whispered humbly, "You should know. After all, you're a successful author, and I'm just a multi-billionaire publisher."

"That's right. Now listen to this great idea I have for a romance novel."

"Let's hear it."

"Well, it's about a female Olympic archer who travels to France to compete but falls in love with two different French men."

"Sounds promising. What's it called?"

"Beaus and Arrows."

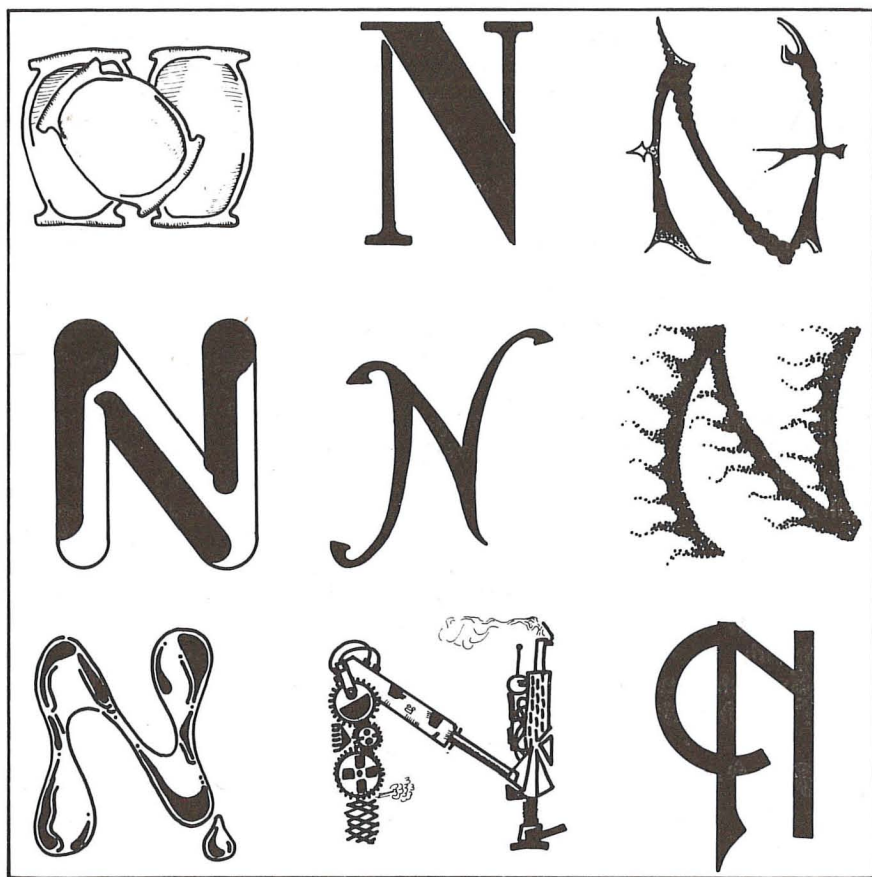
"Oooh, I like it. Tell me more. But first, a cup of sassafras tea."

"Splendid, simply splendid."

## **POVERTY STINKS**

**by Kenneth Frantz**

The relinquishment of my financial security has been the most trying aspect of attending college for me. My previous income, though admittedly mediocre compared to many, was sufficient, when coupled with my wife's, to allow at least a few meager luxuries. Now, however, we're fortunate to be able to pay the bills at the end of the month. Whatever money is left after bills is greedily consumed by the car's lusty appetite for hydro-carbon munchies. My wife, faced with the monumental task of making one dollar do the work of five, is slowly but steadily inching her way toward madness. There are no more lazy afternoons spent wandering around the zoo with the kids, or spur-of-the-moment weekend escapes to the fresh air and serenity of the northern woods. Friday nights spent shamelessly overindulging ourselves at the local Chinese restaurant are now just a spectral memory that visits regularly to haunt me while I'm munching on a grilled cheese sandwich. If I could just lay my hands on a pair of Levi's or that new set of box-end ratchet wrenches that have been eluding me for months, I'd feel like the richest person on earth. As frustrating as it is, however, I know that I must persevere; my options are few and not at all appealing. I'm sure all of this madness will pay large dividends in the future, but for the present I'd be willing to bob for apples in a pool of hot lava for a twenty dollar bill.



LETTER FORMS  
Robert Shapton



# **AU SABLE MORNING: THE DOE**

**by Maureen Taylor**

We started out early from the cabin. Leaving the warm fire inside, we were struck with the crispness of the air outdoors. We could see our breath as we started down the slope to the forest. We stopped to listen — the dew falling from the trees made a startling plop-plop as it fell through the branches and snapped at dry ferns on the ground.

The yellow dirt path plunged into pine and birch woods, with here and there partial clearings of rusty fern, scrub oak, and other bracken. Fresh deer and wild turkey tracks patterned the damp earth. Decaying logs lay everywhere covered with lichen, moss and shelf fungus, adding their musty odors to the tangy air. Sometimes clumps of creamy morel mushrooms huddled near them.

We stopped again to listen. The river lay a little beyond, down a spongy slope, past inky blue-black pines slashed with stark white trunks of paper birch. We could hear the swirling, strong current of the Au Sable as it wound its way through the woods.

Suddenly ferns rustled at our right. A startled doe jerked up her head and stared white-eyed at us, steamy breath wreathing her wet nose. With a snort she darted across our path and sprung past us, a blur of soft tan on quivering flanks and a flash of white tail held high. She disappeared into the trees on the other side. All that was left was the sound of crackling ferns, the dull staccato of hooves, and the scolding of Jays echoing through the woods.

## **THE MORNING**

**by Scott Klein**

I remember a time  
When he was bigger  
Than me when I'd  
Stand on the chair  
Pulled next to the stove.

I remember a time  
When I was younger  
Than the forever song  
Of sizzling sausage  
Beneath a spatula.

I remember a time  
When we were close;  
He was patient  
As I helped him  
Make us breakfast.



YOUNG VIOLINIST  
Jennifer Ameel

# **"OH MY GOODNESS! WHERE'S THE REST OF ME?!"**

**by Elizabeth Quintal**

The room seemed big and vast as I looked around after my first taste of extreme embarrassment. I was six years old and in the *first* grade. No longer was I in kindergarten! I was now going to school all day, not just in the morning. Walking to school by myself with *my* friends without my mother around reminded me that I was older. I was cool!

Then IT happened. The day could only have been described as perfect with the sun shining brightly on the crisp, powdery snow and would have been if it weren't for the invention of snowpants. Yes, snowpants — those horrid articles of clothing with quilted, water-resistant legs, elastic stirrups for your feet, and suspender-like straps that bulked so nicely under your coat.

That day I wore a green turtleneck with a knitted vest that my great-grandmother had made for me over it, and a pair of green "tights" and a green pleated skirt with an elasticized waistband. My long, auburn curls were pulled back and secured with a little green bow. I thought I looked rather nice; after all, it was my favorite outfit.

Walking to school I realized that I would enter my class late. I had had a doctor's appointment that day, and it had run a little over time. But that was all right. My mother had called the school to let them know I was coming, and besides, I kind of liked coming in a little late. That way everyone would look up and see my favorite outfit. When I got to my locker, I set down the bag with my shoes in it, sat on the floor, and proceeded to take off my boots. "Hey!" I thought, "my 'tights' didn't get pulled off with my boots like my socks do. That's great!" So I put my boots in my locker and took off my snowpants and hung them in my locker. I put my shoes on, took a deep breath, and walked into my classroom.

Just as I had thought — everyone *did* look up to see me, but they didn't see my favorite outfit. When I looked around at the laughing faces and saw the look of complete shock on my teacher's face, I realized something must be wrong. I looked down and saw that the wonderful green pleated skirt was missing.

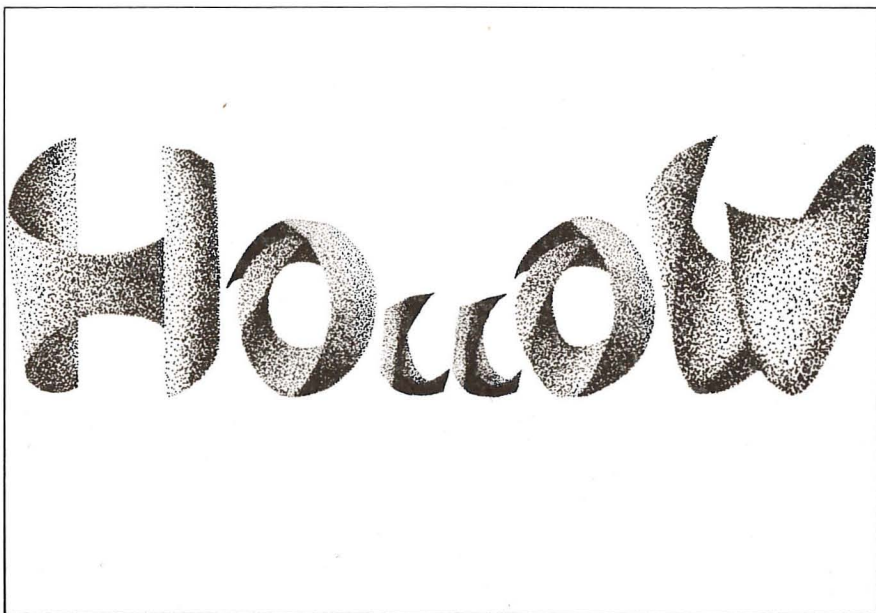
I felt my face turn five shades of scarlet. I felt the tears begin to well up in my eyes. I felt every eye in the room gawking at me. Every laugh I heard felt like a rock in my stomach. Out the door I shot and ran to my locker, not understanding what could have happened to my skirt.

My teacher quieted the class and came out in the hall with me. She found my skirt in my snowpants. I put the skirt on as she convinced me that it was all right to be embarrassed. I followed her back into the room. No one laughed. Maybe that was good, but I still felt everyone staring at me. From that day on I NEVER wore a skirt when I knew I had to wear snowpants!

## **Acknowledgements**

A special thank you to my first grade teacher, Carol Dalrymple, for being there when she was and for giving me the courage to go back into that classroom.





HOLLOW  
Carolyn Klause

# WINGS

by Julie Hill

Like baby birds  
pushed out of trees,  
I am nudged  
out of the nest,  
Forced to test  
my fragile wings  
against the winds  
of some new world.

A fearful dive,  
an unsure dip,  
A blur of sky  
and grass and tree  
And suddenly,  
but breathlessly,  
I soar above my tiny tree.  
Sweet blue freedom,  
adventure scenting  
crisp clean air.

So unaware  
of stormy skies,  
A weightless bird  
with new-found life  
Forced to test  
her fragile wings  
against the winds  
of some new world.

## IN MEMORIAM



**Marge F. Boal**

**September 23, 1927 — April 18, 1987**

The inevitability of her death from cancer never obscured her vision of the humane influence that the arts exert upon both the individual and society. In the year that Marge Boal waged her personal battle against extreme odds, she continued to exert what influence she could with words and deeds to ensure that ARTS ALIVE! activities would not only continue but expand and that the Friends of the Arts, a supporting group for such activities which she helped to found, would reach out to provide greater connections and interactions between the college and the community. The week before her death she spoke with colleagues about her personal dreams for fulfilling such goals. She was unable to follow through on this plan personally as she had hoped to do after her retirement; however, the English Department has established a Marge F. Boal Memorial Fund with which it will seek to make Marge's dreams come true.

The last edition of **PATTERNS** was dedicated to Marge, and at the November reception she shared with students, staff, and friends her thoughts on the meaning of a college degree, on the importance of a liberal education. Afterwards she gave permission for her words to be published in this edition of **PATTERNS**. Her remarks which follow are a fitting testimony epitomizing her philosophy of education as well as a fine tribute commemorating her living legacy of inspiring words.

\* \* \*

On the six o'clock news on Channel 2 last night, the lead-in question was this: "How effective is the undergraduate degree, the four-year college education, in preparing the college graduate for life?" The answer came from a study by the Carnegie Institute, the first study of its kind. That answer was that colleges spend



too much time training students for careers and not enough time teaching them to make good ethical and social judgments. The concern expressed is for the *quality of life* which the college graduate will lead.

Our associate degrees here at our college have long recognized the value of a liberal education, an education which goes beyond career training and includes the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. In this age of science and technology, with its rapid and dramatic changes, we turn particularly to the arts and humanities to guide our judgments and to help us to interpret and deal with the complexities of life and define mankind's hopes and dreams. If we can find our human voice — in words, images, literature, music, man's spirit will ultimately triumph over adversity and even tragedy on the way to our victories and our achievements.

On January 28, 1986, we experienced together a national tragedy, in the loss of the space shuttle Challenger, of our astronauts and of our first teacher in space, Christa McAuliffe. Our imaginations had been touched in a very special way and the tragedy had left us a nation in shock — as we had been many times before. In the 28th edition of **PATTERNS** is a poem entitled "Christa McAuliffe" written by Roberta Lueth, the 1985 recipient of the Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award. This beautiful and eloquent poem shows us what **PATTERNS** magazine truly is. It is the writer and the artist putting into words and images man's deepest feelings as he struggles to deal with his tragedies and yet move toward the realization of his dreams. The artists are the interpreters of life for the rest of us.

In accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature, William Faulkner said that the only proper subject for the writer is "the human heart in conflict with itself." That, he said, is the only thing worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat, but the writer can lead the way so that man will not merely endure, he will prevail.

That is what the arts are all about.

That is what the humanities are all about.

That is what **PATTERNS** magazine is all about

It is the human voice interpreting the meaning of life.

## JUST BEFORE MORNING

by Roberta A. Lueth

1986 Recipient of the Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award

How strange the way time moves tonight. It seems  
Only a moment ago I looked to see  
The moon rise over the trees and stopped my work  
To watch her silver light spread out across  
The lawn. Somehow an hour or more's gone by.  
I have been musing like Mary, waiting for Warren,  
Watching the late October sky for clouds.

Here on the porch it is quite cozy. The cat  
Lies stretched atop a stack of rough drafts and  
Reports upon my desk. He basks in the warmth  
Of lamplight, regally content. Each time  
He stirs, a few loose sheets of paper slip  
To the floor like edicts for urgent counselors.  
His faithful subjects are asleep; heavy  
With doggie dreams, they twitch their way across  
The carpet, oblivious of my feet  
Or the cat's decrees, which fall like child-white leaves  
Around them.

Do they dream of rebellion?  
Better they stick to rabbits. A cat's not easy  
To depose. He has the advantage of  
High places, the haughty temperament of kings.

We are, the four of us, like a painting  
By Vermeer, Still Life with Figures, in which  
The soft hands of a Dalian clock move  
Steadily forward. All else holds: two dogs,  
A lady at her desk, the lamplight and  
The princely cat. Caught by the artist's hand,  
They cannot move. Time is the exception.

I have been thinking this past hour, the hour  
That slipped away unnoticed in the night,  
Of how some years ago I shared a class  
With a famous poet's daughter. We met  
Once at the school; he was already old  
And looked like any parent in that place.

That year I used to walk the beach alone;  
He was accustomed to do the same. We'd  
Often pass and nod, then continue on our way.  
I would have liked to speak to him and yet,  
Myself a private person, I held back.  
He often seemed so lost in thought, holding  
His white head a little to the side, staring  
Beyond the water, he would not see me  
Until I made some sign.

What did he ponder  
In his solitude: words with the power  
To move men's hearts, practicing their effect  
Upon the waves, perhaps; or, ordinary  
Man, the mundane worries of bills and  
Obligations? No matter. My reticence  
Seemed suited to the time. Perhaps he matched

My silence with his own for reasons  
Similar and, our routine established,  
Continued more from habit than from need.  
Sometimes we would exchange a quiet  
Greeting, at other times a courteous nod  
Would seem appropriate. I think I was  
Afraid to intrude on him with words that  
Might ring loudly and quite hollow across  
The empty sands. And so said nothing,  
Passing each night until cold weather drove  
Us both inside, the winds turned bitter  
And the water's spray froze in the crystal  
Winter air.

          The next year I was gone, or he.  
It does not matter. But oh, now... now...  
If I have had regrets, then this is one.  
To have left unsaid the words, the thoughts  
We might have shared. The memory I might  
Now hold instead of the haunting distant  
Vision of my dreams: two isolated  
People on a shore, their common ground so  
Solid, unspeaking in the fragile silence.

Who does not have regrets? The dogs and I  
Are of an age when there is more past than  
Future. The cat's grey-tipped hairs shine under  
The lamplight.

          Why am I looking backward?  
I cannot alter the past nor make the  
Present other than what it has come to be.

I heard another poet lecture once.  
When asked about his methods, he replied,  
"Some writers make a poem say what they want,  
Or nothing. They tear up reams trying to  
Impress their thoughts onto the chosen form.  
Myself, old as I am, have learned it's best  
To give in and let the thought take its own way,  
Guiding it now and then ('that's craft,' he said)  
Then setting it free to be itself,  
To find its own direction — that is Art."

Enough. Come on, dogs, rouse your lazy selves.  
We've had enough of musing. Look at the hour.  
The moon has moved behind the oak, the leaves  
Are scattered in her brilliant light. Up, now;



Let's take a walk. I'll put a sweater on,  
It's cold. I think we'll do without the leashes.  
Hush, now. You'll wake Mother with your complaints.  
The exercise will clear our heads of dreams  
Of poets, past and tyrant cats.  
Stay on the walk, the leaves and grass are damp.

See how the sky's stayed clear of clouds; how bright  
The Hunter's Moon! This air is just the thing  
To wind us up and set us going again.  
Shall we go the same as always? Of course.  
What dog would deviate a hair from his  
Accustomed route? Let's keep together  
If we can. You, there, off the neighbor's lawn.

Look. Up ahead. The man who jogs each morning  
Is puffing in his sweats. Is it that late  
Or has some troubling dream driven him out  
Before his usual hour? His shadow  
Lengthens and recedes as he runs beneath  
The streetlamps. The thinner shadow of the moon  
Lags out behind.

Make room for him to pass.  
All right, you two can run ahead, but keep  
Out of trouble, everyone's asleep.

What do dogs think of shadows? They seem  
Unaware that they are there at all and  
Startle only when the street light stretches  
Them into grotesque shapes which will devour them  
Should they slip and fall into themselves.  
Dogs, like small children, must take for granted  
What turns the adult mind to metaphor.

Hold up there, dogs. I need a rest. Let's stand  
A bit and watch the trees, their tops resplendent  
In the glowing autumn night. Look how the frost  
Is covering each leaf — they'll fall like tiny  
Birds in the morning sun.

One moment more:  
There's a cloud low in the sky. We'll wait to see  
If it will sail across the moon and then we'll go.  
See there: only the smallest wisp has grazed  
Her brilliance. Now it's floated past.

She'll set soon.

Come on, then, let's turn 'round. I know we're not  
To our appointed destination yet  
But never mind. We'll compromise. Instead  
Of walking back, we'll jog. It's not that far.  
We haven't come that far at all, it seems.

Let's stay in the road, we'll have more room. Look.  
Here's our friend the runner going home. Shall  
We speak to him this time as he jogs by?  
"It's a lovely night tonight, the moon and all."  
Oh, dear. I fear I've startled him, he's lost  
His steady pace there for a moment. Isn't  
It odd how footfalls sound, moving away?  
You didn't bark, you two, and greet him.  
Perhaps next time you can mind your manners  
And wag your tails at least.

Keep up the pace.  
See there, we're almost home. The cat has kept  
The lamp for us. You may run across the yard,  
Scatter the leaves and meet me at the door.  
I'll take the long way 'round and catch my breath.

There now, we're in. Yes, you were good. Just sit  
Without wiggling and I will get your treats.  
No crumbs on the carpet, settle down. I see  
The run has made you dizzy with delight.  
Come on, cat, time to move. Get off your prince's  
Perch and help clean up these papers on the floor.  
We'll make some tea and then decide if we  
Should go to bed or stay and watch the sun rise.  
Strangely enough, I don't feel tired at all.

The moon has pulled the silver world behind  
Her like a fine embroidered veil, and set,  
Leaving the darkness for the sun to fill.  
This is my favorite time. I love to stand  
In the center of the stillness, to feel  
The way the day holds back, serene, expectant,  
Just before morning, just before the light.

"Just Before Morning" was written especially for Marge Boal and was patterned after one of her favorite poems, "The Death of the Hired Man" by Robert Frost. It was read by the author and presented to Marge at the **PATTERNS** reception in early November, 1986.

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The creative and performing arts throughout history and the world have always relied in part upon the generosity of those who believe in the value of the arts for all people and for society. The arts preserve and extend our humanity. Friends of the Arts at the St. Clair County Community College was formed a few years ago to enable all who believe in the importance of artistic expression for education and the community to contribute to the financial support and promotion of the arts at the college. Such generosity unites artists and benefactors, college and community, in increasing efforts to provide a variety of events and opportunities for artistic expression and communication. The ARTS ALIVE! focus at the college in art, music, theatre, and writing contributes to the cultural activities for the Blue Water communities. With deep appreciation for their support of the arts at the college and in its community outreach programs throughout the county, we present to our readers — and invite them, too, to join — our distinguished donors, patrons, and friends.

For further information on the Friends of the Arts, contact Patrick Bourke, Associate Dean of Arts and Letters, S.C.C.C.C., 323 Erie Street, Port Huron, MI 48061.

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